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DEC 17

EDITORIAL

INDEPENDENCE—AND AFTER?

On the eve of the Ukrainian independence referendum, President Bush blurted out his ill-timed and shortsighted announcement that the United States would recognize the new nation "sooner rather than later." The Administration later fudged, but the whole performance needlessly thrust the United States into the political ferment in the former U.S.S.R. at a time when an intense struggle is under way over the future shape of the union.

Washington could have followed a course short of recognition that still respected the strong desire for self-determination in the Ukraine. Why intervene so decisively? Why incite? It's their business, let them sort it out. The United States should keep to the sidelines.

We can only speculate about the motives for Bush's precipitate action. Is he now bowing to the swelling chorus of conservatives warning that Russia is historically an aggressive power? The Kissinger-Brzezinski claque says Washington should weaken Russia by encouraging the other republics to go their own way, thus depriving it of their support and resources.

Whatever the political motives, Bush and his advisers have failed to think through the consequences of their shoot-from-the-lips policy. Ideally, the formation of fifteen independent democratic states might be nice, but current historical, political and economic realities suggest that one day a Russian-dominated entity may re-emerge in some form and claim its Slav sister states, including the Ukraine and Byelorussia. If the Ukraine decides to fight to hold on to its territory, there is the prospect of a civil war between two nuclear powers.

That, of course, is a doomsday scenario; a new union or commonwealth could emerge as well by negotiation. Both of those possibilities show why the United States should act carefully, lest it encourage despots rather than democrats.

CREDIT BULIMIA
Herman Gold

UP IN SMOKE
Myron Levin

SCLEROTIC BRITAIN
Robin Blackburn

LE PEN'S PALS
Daniel Singer

IMPERIAL JAPAN
Norma Field

McINTOSH COUNTY LINE
Michael P. Johnson

TINSEL TOWN
Charles Paikert

NADER IN NEW HAMPSHIRE

THE 'NONE OF THE ABOVE' CANDIDATE

MICAH L. SIFRY

Manchester, N.H.

"I am tired of politicians," says Alan McLean, a 33-year-old production control supervisor for General Electric. "I don't think they should be voting themselves pay raises and catering to every special-interest group that comes along. . . . All the people running in this campaign are just Washington insiders." McLean moved up here in 1986 at the height of the real estate boom and bought a condo in one of the many cluster-style developments that were being thrown up back then. Now, says his wife, Kelley, who works for Merrill Lynch, they're worried they're going to be "stuck with it for a very long time." So after voting twice for Reagan and once for Bush, Alan McLean is going to write in Ralph Nader's name in the February 18 New Hampshire primary. Kelley, a Democrat until last year when she switched to independent, is going to do the same. "Ralph Nader not only led the opposition to the [Congressional] pay raise," Alan points out, "he has fought for the average American all his life."

Friday night, November 29, a crowd of 600 people fills the auditorium of the Y.W.C.A. in Nashua. It's an eclectic mix of retirees, schoolteachers, civil servants, small-business owners, professionals, housewives and students home on Thanksgiving break. Some of them haven't voted for President in years, like one former hippie who tells me he hasn't paid attention to politics "since McCarthy in '68." A trucker who happened to be dropping his kids off at the Y squeezes into one of the few remaining chairs. Before the introductions, a tall, graying figure tries to slip unannounced into an aisle seat.

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LETTERS.

CHUTZPAHNIK

Cambridge, Mass.

Even cartoonists—especially unfunny ones like Edward Sorel—are obligated to get their facts right. In his cartoon about "Chutzpah" [Dec. 2], Sorel gets every fact wrong.

1. Michael Milken was not convicted of insider trading. The judge explicitly decided that she was "unable to find that Michael Milken traded on material nonpublic information."

2. Not only did I never argue for "long prison terms for Milken" but well before I became his lawyer I criticized the sentence, noting that "there must be some rational alternative to sending Michael Milken to prison for ten years."

3. I never called "the author of *Den of Thieves* [James Stewart] an anti-Semite because the book mentions that Milken is Jewish." I said that he had invoked religious stereotypes, and I proved that claim in my *New York Times* advertisement of October 17 by quoting his own words as follows:

> Virtually all of the characters Stewart has chosen to write negatively about happen to be Jewish. They are often gratuitously identified by their religion—"Jewish upbringing," "stereotypically Jewish urban backgrounds," "mostly Jewish financiers," "mostly Jewish fraternity," "Orthodox Jewish schooling"—although the relevance of these characteristics is rarely explored. The social events described are almost always "Bar Mitzvahs," "Bat Mitzvahs," "Jewish Weddings," and "Jewish dinners" (given "to impress wealthy Jewish investors"). These events generally reflect "a vulgar display of bad taste." One inside trader is quoted as saying, "I knew after I was bar mitzvahed that there was an inside track," implying that Jewish kids are somehow taught to cheat as soon as they come of age. Stewart's fixation on bar mitzvahs—he falsely claims that even Milken's legal strategy was plotted at his "son's bar mitzvah"—makes it sound like Jews attend no other social functions! The positive characters are largely non-Jewish and Stewart goes out of his way to make that point: "a non-Jew from Cincinnati," "Methodist," "Tough Irishman," "Catholic," "Patrician." The non-Jews are described as "scrupulously honest," "urbane," "soft-spoken" and having "unshakable integrity," in sharp contrast with the Jews who have "loose mores," "ugly, nakedly aggressive tactics" and are "sinister" and "wheeler-dealers."

4. It was a *New York Times* reviewer, and not I, who characterized a book written by Michael Thomas, the person selected to review *Den of Thieves*, as anti-Semitic. I merely quoted Thomas's own words, in my *Times* ad, as follows:

> [The characters in Thomas's book] talk about how "the damn hebes are going to ruin this country," how the Jews "rub their money in our faces," and how the Jews believe that because of the Holocaust, "the Jews are owed compensation by all mankind." . . . Thomas has made similar points—not through characters in a novel, but in his own statements [*The Washington Post*, Jan. 23, 1990]:
>
> "If I point out that nine out of ten people involved in street crimes are black, that's an interesting sociological observation. If I point out that nine out of ten people involved in securities indictments are Jewish, that is an anti-Semitic slur. I cannot sort out the difference."
>
> "A self-declared Jewish correspondent . . . observed that these days there seems to be quite a few people who shout 'Holocaust!' when given a parking ticket."
>
> "The . . . Steinbergs, Kravises, etc. shove their faces in ours and are presented by the 'lifestyle' press as 'collectors' and 'patrons.' "

It is noteworthy that neither Sorel nor *The Nation* would criticize an African-American or other minority person for alerting the public to comparable racism against other minorities. Ask yourselves whether you are imposing a double standard on those who raise serious questions about anti-Jewish stereotyping.

Alan M. Dershowitz

SOREL REPLIES

New York City

Edward Sorel

THE COCA PRETEXTS

Chicago

Robin Kirk's article "Oh! What a Lovely Drug War in Peru" [Sept. 30] contains much useful information but unfortunately ends on a fatalistic note rather than on the need for action. One reason for this is that Kirk accepts too much the U.S. contention that its intervention is aimed at coca production. In reality coca is just a pretext for a vicious counterinsurgency war against the Sendero Luminoso movement and the people of Peru, Bolivia and Colombia. Kirk's discussion of various government plans for combating coca, because it is not situated in this context, obfuscates the real issue. The article also poses the rebel threat as "more nightmarish" than the current regime and the massive atrocities it carried out with U.S. support throughout the 1980s and that continue today. The problem with the approach of the human rights groups is the assumption that if the Peruvian regime were to cease its systematic terror, U.S. military assistance and intervention would be justified. In the meantime, too many people are led to conclude that it is best to support the "democratic regime" (however tarnished), pressure for human rights reforms and hope for the United States to change its stripes and offer genuine economic assistance to the Peruvian people. U.S. "economic assistance" has not helped, and will not help, the people of Peru or any other country of the global South. The purpose of U.S.A.I.D. programs is to create a "favorable investment climate," partially through suppressing rebellion as part of the military-political-economic doctrine of low-intensity warfare.

We cannot wait for the bankers to stop enforcing austerity plans. What is needed, instead, is for more people in the United States to take action, demanding a cessation of its escalating military intervention in Peru and the Andes. One critical component in bringing this about is clearly and systematically to expose the "drug threat" in the Andes as nothing but a pretext for a U.S. war against the people.

Richard Hutchinson

KIRK REPLIES

Lima, Peru

The notion that the United States is spending more than $140 million this year on the Andean drug war as a "pretext" may be a great Hollywood concept, but it doesn't fly south of San Diego. Check your geography. The most antidrug money goes to guerrilla-less Bolivia. Drug-war funding to Colombia doubled in 1991 despite a sharp decline in leftist guerrilla activity. U.S. support for Peru was nil "throughout the 1980s" (Peruvians are capable of exterminating one another with or without U.S. aid). Sure, there are some trigger-happy Yanks who won't say no to popping off

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EDITORIALS.

Dismal Science

"It ain't so much a question of not knowing what to do," Ado Annie sang; it's a question of making a choice. It requires no post-doc study in economics to know how to provide primary care for those strained or broken by the recession: Extend unemployment payments; provide temporary jobs in public sector projects; broaden and strengthen welfare programs for food, health and shelter; set up retraining (and perhaps relocation) centers for those demobilized in one-job towns; and for the corporate sector, make a quick fix of a sizable investment tax credit narrowcasted at labor-intensive companies in depressed areas. Other elements could be added, but the objective would be to assuage the pain of the workers and families laid low by the rolling, double-dipping, dead-cat-bouncing slump.

But instead of creating such a program, the Administration and Congress are dithering about matters that have more to do with politics than with economics. The various personal

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tax cuts proposed by some Republicans and Democrats may be fine-tuned to appeal to one party's particular constituency, but they do little either to help the truly distressed or repair the crumbling economy.

Mario Cuomo, Paul Tsongas, Jack Kemp and George Bush all argue that growth will occur as a result of a cut in the capital gains tax, which suggests how cozy the two-wing, two-party system really is these days. The Republicans and many Democrats also keep hoping that further reductions in interest rates will spur consumers to spend more at the mall, as President Bush himself did over the Thanksgiving holiday. (Surely it was the first time a Bush had stepped into J.C. Penney's since the Mayflower landed.) But there's interest and interest: When Bush meekly suggested that 19 and 20 percent credit card interest charges were a tad high, the stock market crashed.

The upshot will be that none of the above programs will be enacted or ideas implemented—at least not soon, and not in any size or shape that can do any good to those acutely afflicted. But beyond the dithering over the current crisis, there is a sense that a moment of decision has come about the shape of the economy in the next century, and two distinct positions are forming in business, political and academic circles.

One position must be stated in negative terms, for it is the strategy of no strategy. It is held by Bush, at least in his reveries, far from the exigencies of campaigning. It has been repeated by Republican mouthpieces like party chair Clayton Yeutter and *New York Times* columnist William Safire, to wit: The economy ain't broke, so don't fix it. If there is any further problem, it is that the downtick wasn't bad enough to send the unemployment figures really high, thus lowering wages and inflating profits. Fiscal or monetary fixes are undesirable: ideologically, because they imply interference with "market forces"; politically, because they cause intraparty conflict between supply-siders and monetarists; and economically, because of the deficit and attendant nightmares.

On the liberal side, a very different consensus is building around a "public investment" strategy. The theory here is that the infrastructure that supports capitalism has been dangerously neglected for two decades—the same time period during which family income and productivity have stagnated or declined. Japan, Germany and the rest of the West spend umpteen times more on infrastructure—both hard, as in road and rail, and soft, as in education and communications—than the United States.

In a matter of a few weeks, the public investment strategy has spread through the speechwriting cubicles of the current Democratic presidential campaigners with flash-fire speed. Academic economists like Harvard's Robert Reich and M.I.T.'s Lester Thurow, both of whom push public investment, are in demand by many candidates. What the current crop of policy mavens avoid is the issue of control. Today's strategists see public investment as a method to put money in people's hands without changing (a) the way basic economic decisions are made—by the corporate elites—and (b) the prevailing maldistribution of wealth and income. They don't talk about race, they don't talk about class and they certainly don't talk about power. It's another case of "populism" for the middle class, and small change for everybody else.

October Demise?

As Congress rushed toward adjournment and an undeserved rest, Representative Robert Livingston, a Louisiana Republican, stood in the well. He applauded the Democratic leadership for not bringing to the floor a measure to establish a task force to investigate the October Surprise—the allegation that in 1980 the Ronald Reagan campaign connived with Iranian leaders to guarantee that the U.S. hostages would not be released until after the election. On the last day of the session, House Speaker Thomas Foley yanked the resolution in return for Republican cooperation on passing several pieces of legislation, including a bill to put off White House–imposed limits on Medicaid.

The prospect of an October Surprise inquiry riles Republicans no end, and even though the Democrats had the votes to set up the task force, it would have stirred a titanic fuss, threatening the comity Foley needed to complete other business. Now he can say in his defense, What did you want, Medicaid benefits or an October Surprise task force?

On the other side of the Hill, fifty-one Senators voted in November to provide money and subpoena power to a foreign relations subcommittee chaired by Terry Sanford for its own probe of the charges. But that wasn't enough to break a Republican filibuster. Sanford, using available resources, went ahead and held some preliminary hearings. He can continue his inquiry, but to do it right, he'll need funds from the full committee—for which a floor vote is not required. But will those dollars be forthcoming? A Sanford spokesman pronounced his boss's effort "not dead yet."

The House task force may not be dead either. Foley promised that the task force resolution would be revived after the House reconvenes in January. But crafty Republicans will no doubt continue their attempts to undermine it. If the allegations are rubbish, as Republicans claim, then what's their worry? This matter is serious enough (and has gained enough currency) that it deserves to be scrutinized by subpoena-wielding investigators and put to rest one way or another. Democrats, get going.

Nader

(*Continued From Front Cover*)

"Nader is here," someone says, and the crowd breaks into spontaneous applause, some standing in ovation.

Is Ralph Nader running for President? He says no. "I'm not a politician, I'm a citizen advocate." What he is trying to do, he says, is something far more important. "It doesn't mean anything who's elected—the forces of power and greed are so entrenched in Washington that they are going to shape any candidate into 'President Patsy.' " So he is calling on New Hampshire's voters to write in his name on the ballot as a stand-in for "none of the above" and as a protest against Tweedledum/Tweedledee politics as usual. More critical, he is trying to use the NOTA hook as a way to build a citizens' movement for new democratic tools that would put govern-

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ment back in the hands of the people—public financing of elections; citizen-controlled TV, radio and cable; voluntary watchdog associations of consumers or taxpayers; public control of public assets like pension funds and federal lands; citizen standing to sue for remedies across the board; term limits; and, finally, direct initiative, referendum and recall powers. Many of these are familiar Nader proposals. But this is the first time they have been laid before the grass roots with the hope of generating one broad crusade for democracy in America.

At the Nashua Y, the crowd listened intently as Nader ticked off the failings of the current system: widespread poverty and homelessness, infant mortality rates worse than Eastern Europe's, corporate hypergreed and corruption that have only worsened the gap between rich and poor and destabilized the economy, the savings and loan scandal and bailout, the continued expenditure of $140 billion a year defending Europe, Japan and Korea from "God knows what," obsolete weapons systems like the B-2 bomber still in development, distant politicians serving only business interests. "Now here come the candidates, and you're going to have your preferences," he needled the audience. "This one sounds sincere, says he's going to put the country back to work. And this one says he'll deliver national health insurance. Forget it!" Nader shouted. "When you elect a terrific person for President, are you dis-electing the American Petroleum Institute, which makes energy policy? Are you dis-electing the PACs that corrupt, bribe and control these politicians? They're still there."

Well, maybe the people are ready to throw them out, and not merely by rallying to the Democratic candidates currently running as "outsiders" (or hiring consultants to teach them how). The turnout at the Nashua meeting far exceeded what any of the other candidates drew at their kickoff events in the state. More than 200 in the crowd signed up to work with Nader on his "none of the above" drive; another hundred joined up three days later after a similar speech to students at the University of New Hampshire in Durham. Nader, after all, is about as genuine an outsider as there is these days.

Nader says the main vehicle in New Hampshire for building this movement will be efforts by local groups of voters to "summon" the presidential contenders to their towns to be questioned directly by them on what he alternately calls the "citizen power agenda" and the "second-generation Bill of Rights." He says he sincerely hopes some of the candidates will adopt parts, if not all, of this platform, making a NOTA protest here less necessary. Then, depending on how things go, he hopes to bring the crusade to California, where he has a strong base in the Voter Revolt organization (remember the Proposition 103 victory over the insurance companies?). But for all his protestations that this is not a presidential campaign, there are intriguing signs that something is indeed going on.

As Gregory Kafoury, a volunteer who has taken a six-week leave from his law practice and his family in Oregon to work on the Nader campaign, puts it, "If we build it, he will come." (Nader's state coordinator, Ken Deutsch, also likes to use that line.) Back in July, two former Nader's Raiders, Carl Mayer (now a law professor) and Matthew Rothschild (publisher of *The Progressive*), formed a Committee to Draft Ralph Nader for President. Along with other longtime Nader associates, they spent the following months trying to convince him to run, either as a Democrat or as an independent, à la John Anderson. A national poll they commissioned in August found, unsurprisingly, that Nader had very high name recognition. He topped Mario Cuomo's favorable rating 64 percent to 39 percent and did as well as Cuomo against Bush. But the most Nader has been willing to agree to is a write-in effort in New Hampshire. Nevertheless, the endeavor in the state has all the look and feel of a presidential bid. The buttons, bumper stickers and posters all read "Nader '92" and the sign-up sheets that the noncandidate waves at the end of each speech are all headed "Draft Ralph Nader for President."

With its economy reeling, New Hampshire is certainly ripe for protest politics. Former Irvine, California, Mayor Larry Agran, who calls for cutting defense spending in half to fund domestic needs, is working hard to get noticed, but the Democratic Party regulars keep excluding him from their cattle shows and Agran hasn't found a way to turn this insult into a virtue. Jerry Brown, a late but seemingly sincere convert to fat-cat bashing, has only just opened his state campaign headquarters. Both Agran and Brown are way down in the single digits in the polls, as are Tom Harkin and Bill Clinton, behind Paul Tsongas and Bob Kerrey. The usual proportion of voters, about half, are undecided.

In this fluid environment, a write-in for Nader for "none of the above" could do surprisingly well. (A Cuomo candidacy, on the other hand, could overshadow it.) Even a 5 percent showing in New Hampshire would be significant. The obvious virtue of this strategy is that it allows Nader to avoid a firm decision for the time being, while the Draft Nader forces continue organizing. But Nader can't hold to that tack for very long. California, which has less liberal write-in laws, will require that he sign a statement declaring his intent to run. One veteran of progressive campaigns says Nader, who talks openly about the need for a third party, should run this year as an independent, with the goal of drawing more than 5 percent of the vote next November. That would retroactively

(*Continued on Page 816*)

★

After Seeing Mario Cuomo Interviewed On Television

He seems so assured. What a brain!
Then why does he harbor such doubt—
Reminding us all of that Dane?
Well, here's what the doubt is about:
Can he make it through a campaign
Without punching somebody out?

Calvin Trillin

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BEAT THE DEVIL.

The Hostage Thing

At any given time there are plenty of hostages somewhere in the world, but America's obsession with them began on November 4, 1979. On that day Iranian students took over the U.S. Embassy in Teheran, imprisoning the diplomatic staff.

There was a torrent of moralizing here about Islamic beastliness and contravention of civilized norms, but the motives for the hostage taking were coherent and arose in response to American actions. Jimmy Carter had just admitted a cherished U.S. ally—the Shah of Iran—to the United States. Simultaneously the Carter Administration was doing everything in its power to destabilize and, if possible, overthrow the Khomeini government that had replaced the Shah.

In the eyes of the perpetrators and their sympathizers, the hostage taking in Teheran was a successful tactic, leading directly to the defeat of Carter in 1980 and the inauguration of the Reagan team, which swiftly sanctioned arms shipments via Israel, which had already been supplying Iran.

In early 1982 Reagan's Secretary of State, Alexander Haig, gave an explicit go-ahead to Israel's invasion of Lebanon, which followed in June of that year. The ensuing carnage claimed many thousands of Lebanese and Palestinian lives. A year later, as Israel began to fall back behind a southern perimeter of Lebanese territory held by its Lebanese proxies, Reagan's National Security Adviser, Robert MacFarlane, urged an enhanced American presence.

By late 1983 U.S. warships including the battleship New Jersey were shelling Druse villages behind Beirut. This exhibition of American partiality had two immediate effects. One was the bombing of the U.S. Marine barracks at Beirut airport, causing the death of 241 Marines. The second was the kidnappings, which began in the following year.

Deeds have consequences, and those who sermonize about the vileness of kidnapping and kindred terrorism conveniently ignore the other side of the moral equation. The men who held Terry Anderson and the others in chains and darkness for years on end behaved barbarously. But to their captives they pointed to the barbarity of Israel, whose soldiers or proxies had kidnapped hundreds and held them in the dungeons and torture boxes of Khiam, and which by the late 1980s had seized and held without charge thousands upon thousands of Palestinians.

People will fight with the weapons available to them. Bud MacFarlane sent in the Marines and the New Jersey. The Hezbollah responded with kidnapping. There never was any moral symmetry here. Between them, Israel and the United States held an overwhelming lead in the exercise of terror.

Forgotten Captives

The durance of Anderson and the other kidnap victims always had great vividness. As is proper, they weren't forgotten. But somehow the resonance of words like "kidnapping" and "hostage" diminishes when U.S. nationals are not the victims. On November 6 the United Nations staff union organized a Day of Solidarity with Detained U.N. Staff. ABC News correspondent Charles Glass—himself held in Beirut for two months before he managed to escape—was among some former U.N. kidnap victims on the podium. The union simultaneously released a list of U.N. staff members whose rights have been violated by member states of the U.N.

There are 155 names on the list, with violations of their rights including expulsion, detention, arrest, abduction and murder. By far the largest *tranche* of names are those of U.N. staff members seized—in effect, kidnapped—by Israel in the Gaza Strip or the West Bank. In all, Israel has been responsible for the detention or arrest of eighty-seven, of whom forty-three are still being held. Almost all of them are Arab workers for the United Nations Relief and Works Agency. (I exclude those U.N. members seized and sometimes murdered by Israel's proxy, the South Lebanon Army, because the U.N. list does not devote a discrete section to them.) The most abusive nation after Israel is Syria, which has at various times in either Syria or Syria-dominated Lebanon captured eighteen U.N. workers, of whom four either are still in prison or are dead.

Glass made a couple of strong points in his remarks during that Day of Solidarity. After linking the Beirut kidnappings to the U.S.-approved Israeli invasion of Lebanon, he pointed out that "there may be a lesson here for the United Nations. Perceptions of American foreign policy led to the kidnappings of Americans who had little or nothing to do with that policy in Lebanon." In the same manner, he continued, "perceptions of the United Nations, its policies and behavior in the Third World, may lead to the detention, kidnapping or killing of U.N. officials in some of the countries where they work."

The U.N., Glass said, "is appearing more and more to provide an international stamp of approval to American actions. . . . By leaving the command of the entire operation [against Iraq] in the hands of the United States, the United Nations abdicated its responsibilities. . . . The United States, with the support of a pliant United Nations Security Council, chose not to negotiate with Iraq."

On this matter of Iraq we may reasonably ask, What is George Bush doing if not holding hostage millions of innocent Iraqis on the edge of starvation?

Anniversaries: Pearl Harbor, Vietnam

It all depends which bit of the moral seesaw you're sitting on. Amid the fiftieth anniversary of Pearl Harbor, the press has been full of discussion of whether Japan should apologize for the surprise attack. Rigorously excluded from this palavering has been any scrutiny of U.S. diplomatic and trade offensives against Japan, commencing with the London Naval Treaty of 1930 (denying Japan naval hegemony in its own waters) and culminating in the August 1, 1941, total U.S. embargo of all shipments of oil to Japan and the terms for Japanese trading subordination as laid down by the Americans in the Hull-Nomura talks. References to F.D.R.'s "moral embargo" of Japan for its war against China scarcely do justice to the less appetizing though predictable saga of national self-interest in the struggle for economic advantage in Asia. Also shunted swiftly out of sight has been the issue of U.S. guilt for dropping nuclear bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, not to mention the thousand-plane air raid launched

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ALEXANDER COCKBURN

after the Japanese surrender had been announced, though not yet officially received. Secretary of War Henry Stimson recorded that it was "appalling that there had been no protest over the air strikes we were conducting against Japan which led to such extraordinarily heavy losses of life." He thought "there was something wrong with a country where no one questioned that."

But as with kidnapping, perceptions of war guilt depend on the angle of the moral seesaw. This season brings another anniversary, about which remarkably little has been heard. It's generally reckoned that U.S. intervention in Vietnam began thirty years ago, on December 11, 1961, when, on the orders of President Kennedy, two companies of thirty-six Shawnee helicopters and 370 officers and men of the U.S. Army, together with seven T-28 trainer combat planes, landed in Saigon.

In fact the United States had begun its unofficial intervention before the ink on the 1954 Geneva Accords was dry, but in 1961 the descent into the vortex began in earnest. In June of that year came the mission of Eugene Staley, president of the Stanford Research Institute. The Staley Plan as disclosed by the North Vietnamese in 1962 (though scanted by the "Pentagon Papers") called for "pacification" of South Vietnam within eighteen months, sabotage of the North, displacement of up to a million peasants into "strategic hamlets" and new "prosperity zones" in the Mekong Delta.

As Wilfred Burchett remarked of the Staley Plan in an essay, "The Receiving End," this was far from being "not much more than a piece of paper" (as it was described in the "Pentagon Papers") but was instead "the blueprint for a vast military campaign, very soon to be run by the United States itself, to try and herd the whole of South Vietnam's peasantry into 16,000 concentration camps disguised as 'strategic hamlets.' "

By October of 1961 Gen. Maxwell Taylor was cabling Kennedy an "Eyes Only" message from the Philippines outlining stepped-up U.S. military operations in South Vietnam, under the pretext of "flood relief." Hanoi reported the arrival of B-26 bombers and several hundred U.S. officers and troops at Bien Hoa Air Base on November 10. On November 11 came a memorandum to Kennedy detailing "US participation in the direction and control of GVN [South Vietnamese] military operations," while on the civilian side, U.S. personnel were being briefed for "insertion into the Governmental machinery of Vietnam." By January 1962, as Kennedy's counter-insurgency expert Roger Hilsman later regretfully noted in his book *To Move a Nation*, by a "tragic error" U.S. planes had bombed a Cambodian village. The error was duly rectified when the correct Vietnamese village was bombed, with severe loss of civilian life.

Eleven years later the United States withdrew, leaving behind three destroyed countries and about 2 million dead. Apologize? How can there be apologies when there is no concept of wrongdoing and when, to this day, the U.S. continues—against the angry urgings of its closest allies—to impose economic sanctions on Vietnam and effectively hold millions of Vietnamese hostage to America's enduring need for revenge. How lightly weigh the Hezbollah's kidnappings on scales such as these.

Other Anniversaries

Just as the United States was plunging into Vietnam the French were nearing the end of their ferocious effort to hang on to their colony Algeria. The Algerian independence movement, the F.L.N., called for a demonstration in Paris on October 17, 1961. I can remember reading about it at the time in the British press. The French police had attacked the marchers savagely, killing two. Such was the official number, though friends in Paris said it had been much worse.

Just how much worse has only now emerged. On October 20 *Le Monde* published an article by Anne Tristan (republished in the *Guardian Weekly* for November 3) describing the homicidal brutality of French riot police that left as many as 300 dead. The F.L.N. put the number of dead or disappeared at 327. The internal French police reckoning was 140.

Algerians were beaten to death, then thrown into the Seine. There were piles of bodies in the streets. Some 9,000 demonstrators were herded into two sports stadiums and forced to run gantlets of police. Parisians watched the proceedings with "perplexing impassiveness." Marthe, a pro-F.L.N. witness quoted by Tristan, heard someone on a cafe terrace say as he watched the hunt for Algerians, "Well, this evening at least they've put on a show for us!"

This indifference reminded me of the closed doors against which little French Jewish children vainly beat when they were about to be deported to death camps. The head of the Paris police at the time of the 1961 demonstration was Maurice Papon, now facing charges of having ordered the deportation of Jews from Bordeaux during World War II.

My colleague Scott Sherman checked contemporary reports of the Paris demonstration in some U.S. newspapers and magazines. Most gave a single-number casualty figure. *Newsweek*'s Angus Deming said the police instigated the violence. *Time*, by contrast, blamed the "rabble" for starting things. Some *Time* journalists, cited by FAIR, are currently blaming the new Time Warner ownership for compromising the weekly's former integrity. If FAIR wants to start defending the traditions of old-style *Time* (Lucian calendar) I suggest they review the archives of this disgusting publication.

Tired of anniversaries? On December 7, 1975, Indonesia invaded East Timor, commencing massacres that left at least 100,000 dead, as the former Portuguese colony was annexed as Indonesia's twenty-seventh province. On December 6, 1975, President Ford and his Secretary of State, Henry Kissinger, were in Jakarta and raised no demur when apprised by their hosts of what was to happen the next day. Official U.S. reaction to the Indonesian killing of at least fifty Timorese demonstrators in Dili, the capital of East Timor, a few weeks ago has been demure to the point of inaudibility.

Oh, and between December 11 and 13, 1981, the U.S.-trained Atlacatl infantry battalion murdered about 1,000 men, women and children in the Salvadoran province of Morazán. The A.P. report in front of me continues to refer to it as an "alleged" massacre. "If I had a rocket launcher . . ."

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BELTWAY BANDITS.

DAVID CORN

■ Bush's *Contra*-dictions

It was a moment of profound irony. Shortly before Thanksgiving, a mean-talking, pandering President Bush, at an education forum in Columbus, Ohio, threatened to veto the then-pending crime bill in part because it would not expedite the execution of criminals. At about the same time in Miami, Carlos Lehder, the Hitler-admiring former drug kingpin from Colombia now serving a life sentence plus 135 years in a U.S. prison, took the stand as a witness for the Bush Administration against Manuel Noriega and claimed that his own criminal past involved a $10 million contribution from his Medellín cocaine cartel to the Reagan/Bush-backed *contras*. What's wrong with this diptych?

Let's begin with Columbus. Bush took the occasion of a gathering on education to rant about legislation that is the product of the most intellectually dishonest debate in Washington: the one over crime. Most of the fuss about the crime bill, which eventually sank, concerned whom to kill and how fast the justice system should produce executions. The bill expanded the federal death penalty to cover some fifty crimes—including the murder of federal egg inspectors—but did not, as Bush wanted, limit prisoners' appeals, which delay electrocutions, gassings and the like. This all has little to do with street crime, but practically no one in official Washington is willing to broach the dreaded subject of the causes of crime and how to reduce it at the roots. If the President were as eager to fund the nation's schools and economic development as he is to pull the switch, then perhaps there might be a drop in crime.

On to Miami. Here a former drug boss testified against a former C.I.A. asset whose capture was the result of an invasion launched by a former C.I.A. Director whose hard-on-crime Justice Department cut deals with crooks to make its case against Noriega, whose removal from Panama was accomplished at the cost of at least several hundred deaths and was followed by an increase in drug activity there. Lehder certainly is not a credible fellow, but the government considers him reliable. Moreover, his testimony regarding the *contras* is strikingly reminiscent of that of Ramon Milian Rodriguez, a former drug-money launderer.

In 1987, Milian Rodriguez told a Senate Foreign Relations subcommittee chaired by John Kerry that on behalf of his Colombian patrons he passed $10 million to the *contras* after meeting Felix Rodriguez, a former C.I.A. operative working with the *contras* as well as an associate of Donald Gregg, then national security adviser to Vice President Bush. Rodriguez indignantly denied the charge but admitted he had met with Milian Rodriguez once. The subcommittee concluded that Milian Rodriguez's account was not credible after he failed a polygraph test. According to a government source familiar with the test, though, Milian Rodriguez was not asked the right questions. He had told the subcommittee that he had offered Rodriguez money for the *contras* and that Rodriguez had indicated the rebels would accept help from anyone. But the polygraph examiner asked the money launderer if Rodriguez had *requested* money. Milian Rodriguez said yes, even though that was not exactly correct, and the examiner interpreted his response as a lie. The examiner also inquired if Milian Rodriguez had arranged for money to be given to the *contras*, and found the response to be inconclusive. And so the allegations were dismissed.

■ Call 1-800-CIADEAL

Maybe Lehder lied. Perhaps Milian Rodriguez fibbed. (Still unexplained is a ledger of his that showed financial transactions occurring under the heading "C.I.A.") But there is also the matter of a Miami attorney who heard a similar story. In 1986, Drug Enforcement Administration officers interviewed this attorney, who had traveled to Colombia to discuss representing the leading cocaine traffickers. According to D.E.A. records, which delete the name of this source, the Miami attorney was told by a Colombian lawyer who worked for Jorge Ochoa, one of the dealers, that Ochoa had financed both *contras* and Sandinistas. On one trip the Miami attorney met with Ochoa, Lehder and their "boss," Pablo Escobar. The three drug lords asked the lawyer to carry an offer back to the United States. They would help U.S. intelligence by providing information on developments in Nicaragua, Cuba, Colombia, Panama and Mexico if they received amnesty for their previous cocaine dealing. Lehder claimed that he and Escobar had people in Nicaragua who could provide intelligence useful to Washington. The D.E.A. records do not indicate if U.S. intelligence ever replied. But Lehder eventually got his chance to make a deal with the U.S. government. In return for his testimony against Noriega, he got better prison conditions and hopes for a reduction in his sentence.

■ Just Put Some Brain Cells in That Paper Cup

Nothing drives politicians to extremes like the war on drugs. Representative Joe Barton, a Texas Republican, recently slipped into an "emergency" funding bill an allocation of $50,000 for possible random drug testing of members of Congress. This prompted a biting letter from Representative Peter DeFazio, an Oregon Democrat, who suggested the money would be better spent on installing an alcohol-sensitive breathalyzer interlock system on the voting mechanism used on the House floor. DeFazio also proposed that members submit themselves to public I.Q. tests, and that Barton lead the way. In the Senate, Jesse Helms has been pressing to deny federal educational assistance to anyone incarcerated in a federal or state prison. Meanwhile, a recent General Accounting Office report notes that 27,000 of the 62,000 inmates in federal prisons have a moderate to severe drug and alcohol problem, yet as of this past April only 364 of them were receiving intensive treatment. Another G.A.O. study found that more than 500,000 of 680,000 state prison inmates may have substance abuse problems but only about 20 percent of them receive any treatment. Invasions and executions are macho, but funding programs that reduce the number of uneducated addicts released from prisons is a truer way to get tough on crime.

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Time Warp

EDWARD SOREL

CAN YOU BELIEVE THIS?!! TWO WEEKS AFTER A NAZI ALMOST GETS ELECTED GOVERNOR BY CAMPAIGNING FOR A "CHRISTIAN NATION," TIME'S COVER ASKS THE QUESTION, "HAS SEPARATION OF CHURCH AND STATE GONE TOO FAR?"
DECEMBER 9
TIME
OF COURSE, TIME MAKES A PRETENSE AT BEING OBJECTIVE, BUT DO THEY REMIND READERS THAT JEFFERSON AND OTHER FOUNDING FATHERS WERE DEISTS AND NOT CHRISTIANS?
OF COURSE NOT!!
DID TIME MENTION THE HABITUAL CONFLUENCE OF RIGHT-WING REGIMES WITH FUNDAMENTALIST RELIGIONS?
OF COURSE NOT!!
AND YOU CAN BET IT DIDN'T POINT OUT THAT EVERY DEMAGOGUE FROM TORQUEMADA TO SADDAM HUSSEIN HAS USED ORGANIZED RELIGION TO MANIPULATE THE MASSES.
YOU'D THINK THAT BY NOW PEOPLE WOULD HAVE WISED UP... BUT THEY HAVEN'T... I GUESS THAT'S WHY I CAN'T BELIEVE IN A SUPREME BEING... I MEAN, IF THERE REALLY IS A GOD...
...WHY DID HE MAKE SO MANY SCHMUCKS?!!

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ARTICLES.

BUSH'S CREDIT BULIMIA

Gorge Big Banks, Starve Customers

HERMAN GOLD

Few issues have risen and fallen in Washington faster and more spectacularly. In just a matter of days in mid-November, President Bush raised it, Senator Alfonse D'Amato sold it, the Senate bought it, the stock market gagged on it and the banks killed it. The issue was lower interest rates on credit cards; what buoyed it and then clobbered it was the credit crunch of 1991.

Three months ago, President Bush was not interested in talking about any aspect of the credit crunch; he preferred to concern himself with peace in the Middle East and turmoil in the Soviet Union. But in October the credit question could no longer be ignored: Polls showed that 70 percent of Americans were convinced that the economy continued to languish in recession.

The President's advisers were split. On one side, those more involved in campaign fundraising, like Commerce Secretary Robert Mosbacher and Vice President Dan Quayle, as well as ideological growthmen like HUD Secretary Jack Kemp, had gotten an earful from their friends about banks so stingy that they were cutting off credit to Republican businesses. They wanted the President to do something.

On the other side, Treasury Secretary Nicholas Brady, Chairman of the Council of Economic Advisers Michael Boskin and Chairman of the Federal Reserve Board Alan Greenspan had forecast a shallow and short recession from the moment they stopped denying its existence. They were not worried. Nor were they relying on the invisible hand of a free market. Rather, they were expressing their confidence in a particular market intervention, already in place, that aimed to end the credit crunch by making banks rich.

The chosen policy starts from the premise that banks should be rich. Fat banks can survive lean times and keep doing their job of taking deposits and making loans. The problem is that not all U.S. banks are fat; many inadvertently embarked upon crash diets in the 1980s. Today those banks are so thin that their fear of further losses is keeping them from doing their job of lending. In some cases, notably Citicorp, they do not have enough shareholders' funds to meet the minimum ratio of capital to loans that bank supervisors from industrial nations have agreed on.

The thin banks bet much of their capital on real estate—and lost. The pyramids of the greed decade are the see-through, half-empty office buildings of major American cities. What matters for the business of banking is not the aesthetics of those follies but the volume of real estate losses that they represent for the banks that made the loans to build them. Bankers find themselves having to carry not only the buildings but the builders as well—the Trumps, the Portmans, the Reichmanns and other big developers. The banks have put Trump, for instance, on a personal allowance of $375,000 per month, but their exposure in his projects is so large that they dare not drag him into the bankruptcy he has earned.

It is hard to feel sorry for banks that have lost a fair fraction of their wealth by financing buildings that no one will occupy for years. While it is true that the Empire State Building took most of the years from 1931 to 1941 to fill up, an earlier generation of bankers had the excuse that they could not foresee the Great Depression and its 25 percent unemployment. The current generation of bankers has overbuilt to the extent of 20 or 30 percent vacancy rates in many cities in the midst of what is, to date, no more than a middling bad recession and 6.8 percent unemployment. Today's empty buildings testify to a banking myopia that approaches blindness.

The idea was simple. Fatten up the banks by dropping short-term interest rates.

Unfortunately, the economy as a whole is bound up in the health of banks. Banks with shallower pockets, and especially banks that have lost substantial fractions of their capital in real estate, have tried to compensate by shunning all risk. In the process, they have slammed sound businesses against the wall and demanded that outstanding loan balances be reduced. This unseemly behavior, repeated across the nation but concentrated in the Northeast, goes by the name credit crunch, capital crunch or even credit crumble.

Long before the polls led President Bush to worry out loud about interest rates on credit cards, he and his economic advisers had settled on their answer to the credit crunch. The idea was simple. Fatten up the banks by dropping short-term interest rates and then letting the bankers do what comes naturally in such circumstances: nothing. The result is cheaper money for banks but not for their customers.

In 1989 the banks charged one another an average of 9.2 percent for overnight loans, the so-called federal funds rate. Meanwhile, the prime rate (something of a misnomer since the largest and best-rated corporations can borrow for less) ranged between 10.5 percent and 11.5 percent. The difference between what the banks were paying and what they were charging corporate borrowers was thus about two percentage points. By early 1991, the federal funds rate had been brought down to 6 percent, but the prime rate had come down to only 9 percent. The difference between the overnight bank rate and the prime rate for corporate borrowers widened from about two percentage points to three percentage points. With some

Herman Gold is a pseudonym for a group of authors that includes a historian, an economist and a psychologist.

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$400 billion in corporate loans priced at or above the prime rate, this widening of the spread feeds about $4 billion extra into bank income.

As the weakness in the economy has persisted through 1991, the Federal Reserve has seen fit to lower the federal funds rate to 4.75 percent, and the prime rate has followed it down to 7.5 percent. Although the spread is no longer widening, banks are still trying to maintain the fat three percentage point gap.

At the same time, consumers have had to pay much more than banks for access to credit. Car-loan rates came down only from 12 percent to 11 percent between 1989 and 1991. Rates on personal loans remained stuck at 15 percent. And the busy or hapless folks who fall into debt on their credit cards are still paying 18 or 19 percent even when the banks are funding themselves at less than 6 percent.

Such spreads have done wonders for healthy banks, which are reporting record earnings. As a means of restoring the health of banks that are in bad shape, however, this forced feeding is working so slowly as to make progress invisible. So other measures to increase bank profits have been rolled out—and generally not recognized for what they are.

Alan Greenspan has supplemented the widening spreads with a lowering of reserve requirements—the non-interest-bearing billions that banks maintain with the Federal Reserve. This move may be likened to a tax cut focused on banks, a tax cut that did not have to be argued in Congress. As a result, reserves have fallen from more than $60 billion to $50 billion. At the current federal funds rate of 4.75 percent, that's another $500 million a year for the banks, their borrowers and their customers. Under current circumstances, the banks have done their best to claim most of that tax cut for themselves.

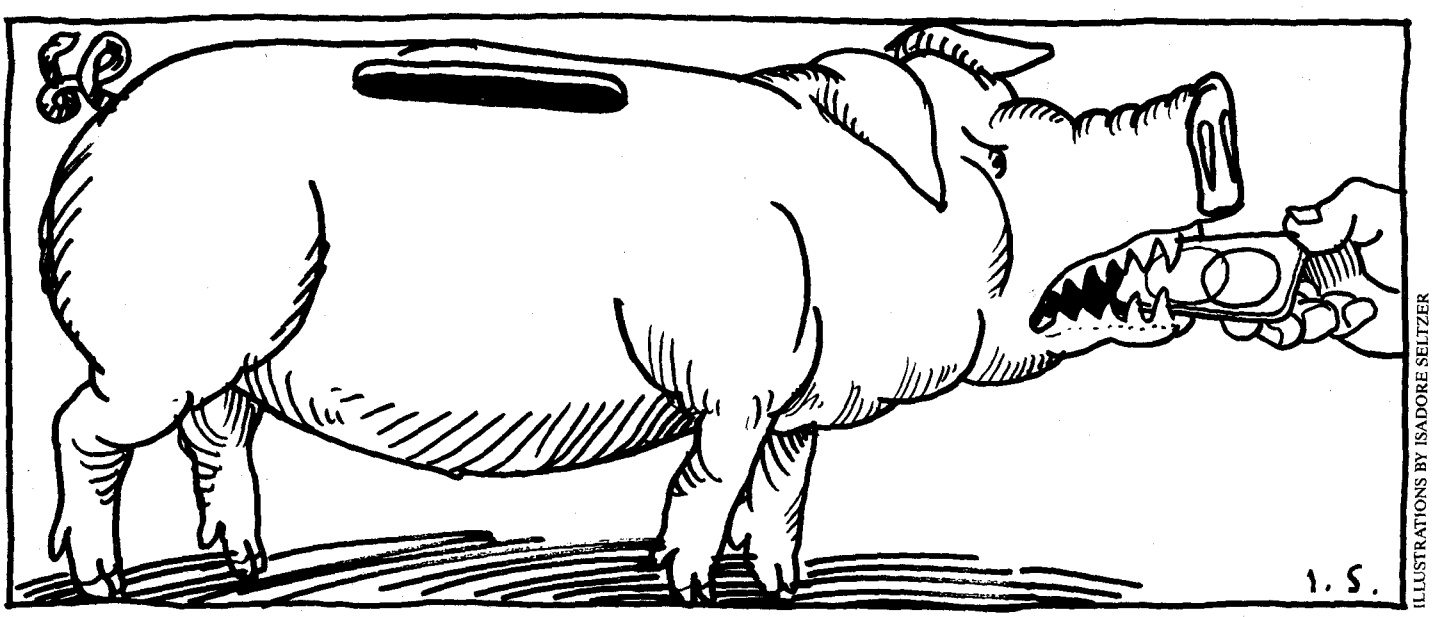
Why don't the banks compete for credit-worthy customers by offering lower interest rates, and so drive down the difference between their cost of credit and their price for credit to something like the 2 percent spread that obtained in 1989? Part of the answer is that the weak banks can't afford to compete and the strong banks would rather maintain current profit margins than fight for increased market share. But another part of the answer is that the Administration and the Federal Reserve have joined in tacit support of enriching the banks. This is a notable application of the trickle-down theory of economic progress: As the banks become richer, they will lend more easily and the credit crunch will end.

As a solution to the credit crunch, fattening the banks has until recently had the considerable advantage of being politically painless. By November, however, it began to appear that the trickle-down was, in political terms, going too slowly. President Bush tried jawboning the banks into lowering consumer interest rates by picking on the particularly high interest rates on credit card debt. On Tuesday, November 12, he addressed a Republican fundraising luncheon as follows: "I'd frankly like to see credit card rates down. I believe that would help stimulate the consumer and get the consumer confidence moving again."

The next day Senator D'Amato introduced, and the Senate passed 74 to 19, an amendment to one of the banking bills circulating on Capitol Hill. The amendment aimed to limit the interest rate on credit cards to the "penalty rate" charged by the Internal Revenue Service to discourage citizens from falling behind in their tax payments, plus 4 percent. The penalty rate plus 4 percent amounted to 14 percent at the time of the amendment—a rate substantially lower than the 18 or 19 percent that major banks were charging their credit card customers.

On Thursday, to no one's surprise, investors and traders of credit-card-backed bonds marked down their prices sharply. These bonds exist in part because the banks cannot themselves afford to hold the loans represented by credit card debts.

On Friday the Dow Jones index of industrial stocks fell 120 points, or about 4 percent—the fifth-largest point loss ever—and it seemed to many that the Senate vote for D'Amato's amendment was the culprit. D'Amato defended his amendment by fingering the Frankenstein of "program trading," but bank lobbyists swarmed over Capitol Hill to argue that, if the amendment were enacted, in the words of *The New York Times*, "shaky banks might go under and millions of Americans whose credit ratings are less than ideal



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would have their credit cards recalled." The number that bankers threw around was 60 million credit cards, recall of which would cast the Congress in the role of the Grinch that stole Christmas.

Administration officials began to backpedal furiously from Bush's luncheon remarks. "If this legislation went through, the only people who would have credit cards are the rich people in this country," said Treasury Secretary Brady. He described the proposal as "wacky." Richard Darman, Director of the Office of Management and Budget, called the proposal "half-baked . . . preposterous." Dan Quayle said any such legislation would be vetoed. After *The Washington Post* reported that Bush's remarks had been added by John Sununu, who "decided to wing it himself," Sununu called that story a lie and blamed the mess on Bush, who supposedly just "ad-libbed" during his speech.

By Friday night Greenspan had weighed in against the amendment with the revealing argument that "the negative effect on banks' earnings will put further pressure on their ability to generate or raise capital at a time when concerns about capital positions are already contributing to restraint on bank lending." With characteristic directness, Greenspan was making a threat even more serious than that of the bankers recalling our credit cards. Consumers must pay what Republican Congressman Jim Leach called "usurious" credit rates or the banks won't be able to lend to businesses. Pay up or get laid off.

It appears that bankers are not willing to give up the credit card interest rates that provide their highest profits. They may try to act on their threats if they are pushed, in which case they will provide a ready-made issue for Democratic or populist candidates who will ask why Republican bankers should be independent businessmen when it comes to profits but wards of the taxpayer when it comes to losses.

"Commercial credit is the creation of modern times, and belongs, in its highest perfection, only to the most enlightened and best-governed nations. . . . Credit is the vital air of the system of modern commerce. It has done more, a thousand times, to enrich nations, than all the mines of all the world." Those are the words of Daniel Webster on the floor of the Senate on March 18, 1834. Awareness of the fragile and ultimately moral basis of commercial credit seems to have eroded since then, for bankers and government officials alike.

Having left Webster behind, we might turn to Stan Laurel for help in admiring the fine mess we're in. Bankers' follies in the 1980s impoverished them and left them ill-equipped to do their job when they were most needed. No banker need take the fall, however; bankers have permission from the government to make up their losses by charging uncompetitive interest rates to small businesses and families. And the banks got a special tax cut. All of which means the Federal Reserve's interest-rate cuts do less good for the economy than they might, and the deficit gets a little worse. Perhaps worst of all, the banks seem to be taking their feeding without accepting any responsibility to share their good fortune with customers. □

SECRET CIGARETTE ADDITIVES

What Goes Up In Smoke?

MYRON LEVIN

Every year, the tobacco companies and their sworn enemies at the Department of Health and Human Services join in a ritual dance. The tobacco companies turn over to H.H.S.'s Office on Smoking and Health a list of the hundreds of secret ingredients they add to cigarettes. Federal officials obligingly lock it in a safe, away from the prying eyes of consumers and health scientists. Required by a watered-down 1984 law, the exercise is what passes for public disclosure of the secret and potentially dangerous ingredients added to cigarettes. In fact, the list is "page after page of effectively useless information," complained Senator Edward Kennedy at a hearing last year of his Committee on Labor and Human Resources.

The list does not specify which additives are used in particular brands. Were they allowed to read it, smokers would still not know what ingredients are added to Winstons or Virginia Slims. Nor would scientists be able to determine if certain additives, alone or in combination, increase the already considerable risks of smoking. As things stand, however, this vagueness is beside the point. The list is off-limits to public scrutiny and there are criminal penalties for disclosing it.

"I think that consumers have a right to know what is in tobacco products—just as they have a right to know what is in other consumer goods like food products—but I'm not allowed under law to release this information to the public," said Dr. Ronald Davis, until earlier this year director of the Office on Smoking and Health and official guardian of the list. Remarked a Congressional aide, who would not speak for attribution, "If you're going to label ingredients on boxes of cereal, it's stupid not to label ingredients on the most dangerous product sold in America." For their part, the cigarette makers say they aren't trying to keep the public in the dark but are merely protecting brand recipes that are trade secrets. "We have complied scrupulously with the law," said Stanley Temko, a lawyer with Covington & Burling, the industry's powerhouse Washington law firm.

But the situation underscores the companies' success, over more than a dozen years, in averting meaningful disclosure of what they put in their cigarettes. "Tobacco products stand very much as the exception to what's really become standard practice as far as notification of the public," said Dr. Mona Sarfaty of the Senate labor committee staff. "I would characterize the situation as one of special privilege for the tobacco industry. It is just a perfect reflection of the incredible political power of the tobacco industry and the money it throws around to protect its product."

The issue is before Congress again this session. But there

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is no reason to think that concerned lawmakers and health activists will do better than they have in the past against the determined resistance of the tobacco companies and their legions of lobbyists and lawyers.

Although cigarettes appear to be nothing but tobacco rolled in paper, that has never been completely the case. Chemicals, plant extracts and other ingredients are used to keep tobacco moist and fresh and to control taste, odor and burn rate. That the amounts used are significant is suggested on a package of Marlboros bought in France, which lists the ingredients as 92 percent tobacco and paper and 8 percent "agents de texture, de saveur et conservateurs"—texturizers, flavorants and preservatives. (In the United States, the Marlboro pack lists the following ingredients: "Selected fine tobaccos.")

The companies turned to additives to fortify the taste.

Additives used in American cigarettes are thought to be similar to those on lists prepared by the Canadian and British governments from data supplied by their domestic tobacco firms. A number of these ingredients give cause for concern. For example, shellac, acetone and turpentine appear on one or both lists, as do acetaldehyde and glyoxal, both animal carcinogens. There's methyl salicylate, which causes birth defects in hamsters when given orally or applied to the skin. And there's licorice root, a flavorant and moistener that contains glycyrrhizic acid, which produces cancer-causing polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons when burned. When heated, caramel and other sugars used to flavor cigarettes produce catechol, a co-carcinogen (a compound that strengthens the effect of other cancer-causing compounds). Several natural amino acids that are added to tobacco are converted to suspected carcinogens when heated, according to scientists at the American Health Foundation.

With or without additives, there is no question that tobacco smoke causes lung cancer, heart disease and other ailments, health officials say. But whether additives increase the risk is of great interest, because their use is believed to be heaviest in the low-tar and nicotine brands that are promoted as safer. The use of additives accelerated after the lung cancer scares of the 1950s and 1960s threatened the cigarette makers with a disastrous loss of customers. The industry responded by introducing "lighter" brands to help worried smokers rationalize their habit. But the light brands—which used milder tobacco, dense filters and ventilation holes to dilute the smoke—lacked the strong taste to which smokers were accustomed. So the companies turned to additives to fortify the taste. As a result, health officials say, the brands purported to be safest are those most heavily laced with secret additives.

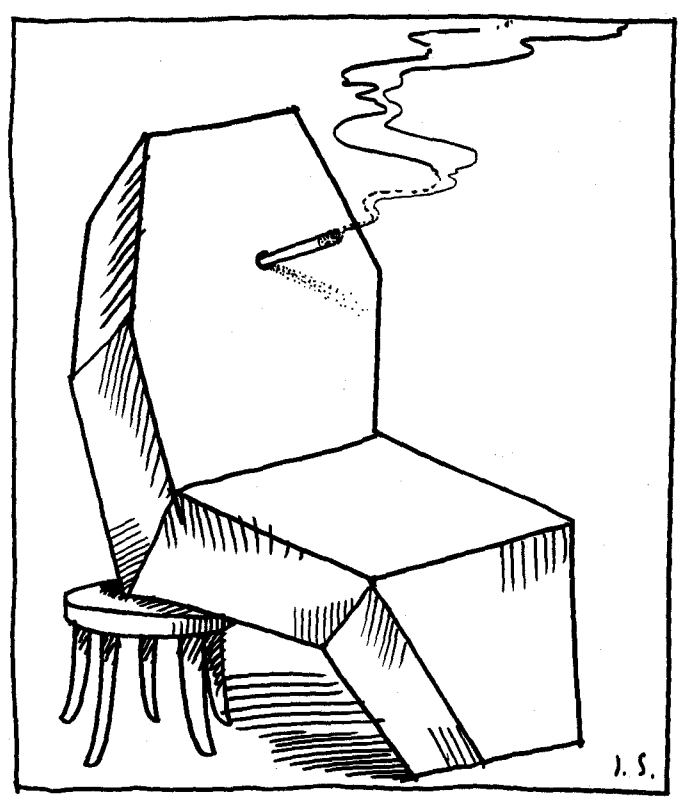
Congress recognized the problem more than a dozen years ago, directing the Department of Health, Education and Welfare (predecessor of H.H.S.) in a 1978 authorization bill to study and report to Congress on "the health risks associated with smoking cigarettes containing any substances commonly added to commercially manufactured cigarettes."

There was one problem, however. Health officials didn't know which substances were "commonly added" and the cigarette makers weren't telling. In 1980, Surgeon General Julius Richmond was rebuffed when he wrote each of the major companies to request a list of additives. After he wrote a second time, two of them sent him copies of a British government additives list—without saying which of the ingredients they used. Years later, data on cigarette additives were still "urgently required"—according to the 1984 Surgeon General's report—but were impossible to obtain "because cigarette companies are not required to reveal what additives they employ."

That year, however, it appeared a solution was in sight. Congress passed the legislation that established the current set of rotating health warnings for cigarette packs and advertising. Another provision of the 1984 law required the cigarette makers, for the first time, to provide H.H.S. with an annual list of the additives they used. But the mandate was fatally undermined by compromise. Rather than requiring all companies to list the ingredients and quantities used in each brand, the law allowed the industry to produce a single list lacking all these specifics. Moreover, the law treated the annual lists like state secrets, requiring H.H.S. to keep them under lock and key and making disclosure to the public a crime.

The law did allow H.H.S. officials or contract scientists working for the agency to study the list and report findings and recommendations to Congress. Had this occurred—and had Congressional committees held hearings or issued reports—some information could have become available to the public. But H.H.S. has never made an in-depth analysis or submitted studies to Congress.

Part of the explanation lies in the lean budget of the Of-



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fice on Smoking and Health, which in most years has received about $4 million to prepare the annual Surgeon General's report, conduct antismoking education and assist tobacco control efforts by the states. The agency once retained a noted toxicologist, and another time a chemist, to review the ingredients list as a first step toward preparing a report. But nothing came of either effort. Because the list is an undifferentiated mass of chemical names not grouped by brand, a meaningful study would probably cost hundreds of thousands of dollars—less than the price of a Patriot missile, but serious money for the Office on Smoking and Health.

The failure also reflects a philosophical split within the coalition of health agencies, antismoking activists and tobacco critics in Congress. For many of them, additives are a right-to-know issue and a potential propaganda weapon of great value. They would like nothing better than to prove that the same unpronounceable chemicals that induce panic when found at Superfund sites are deliberately added to cigarettes. But other activists regard the issue as something of a distraction. They fear that if health officials were to focus on a few harmful additives, they would be implying that without them smoking could be safe. Thus some antismoking forces have not pursued the issue with the same ardor as they have cigarette advertising or other causes.

Legislation to require public disclosure of additives failed in the last session of Congress, but Senator Kennedy is trying again. His omnibus antismoking education bill, introduced in May, would require cigarette manufacturers to list for H.H.S. all additives and their quantities by brand. They would also have to list ingredients on cigarette packs or package inserts—although to mollify the companies, additives deemed trade secrets would not have to be listed by name. Even so, the measure is probably headed for defeat.

Meanwhile, the cigarette makers continue to insist that the ingredients they use are of no real interest to anyone, other than competitors. However, the recent experience of Canada casts doubt on such assertions. Since 1989, all manufacturers of cigarettes sold in Canada have been required to list by brand all additives and the quantities used. The information has been provided to Canadian health officials but not to the public. But U.S. tobacco companies are taking no chances. When the requirement took effect, R.J. Reynolds staged a temporary retreat, pulling its brands out of Canada. After a while Reynolds came back—announcing that it had reformulated the brands so the Canadian recipe was different from the American. Philip Morris, the world's leading cigarette maker, took more drastic action, permanently withdrawing from the Canadian market. American brands account for only about 1 percent of Canadian cigarette sales. But even that translates into retail sales of tens of millions of dollars.

Said Neil Collishaw, until recently director of the tobacco products section of the Canadian Department of Health and Welfare: "The question that I think I would ask if I were an American is, what is it that American tobacco companies don't want the Canadian government to know about American cigarettes, to the point where they're willing to stop shipping their product to Canada altogether?" □

ANARCHY IN THE U.K.?

Cracks in the Stately Facade

ROBIN BLACKBURN

Britain resembles one of those magnificent inhabitants of Shangri-La—ancient yet superficially well-preserved—about to be thrust beyond the city gates into a wilderness whose elements must hasten the long-obscured degeneration of the years. The fateful push will come with 1992, and of all the looming elements, the most unforgiving will be European integration, Scottish separatism, constitutional deadlock and popular longing for a more just and accessible system. The Conservatives who cast Mrs. Thatcher aside so ungratefully a year ago did so because they did not trust her to negotiate this stark territory.

Before mid-June there will have to be an election in Britain. Most political commentators now expect that it will be a close-run thing, with a strong chance that no party will enjoy a majority and also that Scotland will move further along on its own course. The first possibility, that of a "hung Parliament," would plunge the country into a constitutional crisis in which Parliament could indeed twist in the wind, its leadership left to the Queen's intervention, as a consequence of hoary electoral arrangements and an unwritten constitution. The second possibility would smooth the way for a Scottish Declaration of Independence. Beyond this, negotiations over the shape of Europe—the latest round taking place in Maastricht, Holland, on December 9 and 10—threaten either isolation and a run-in with Germany's formidable Chancellor Kohl or a far more stunning fate: the loss of all those peculiar institutions that embody the world's most antiquated political system.

The state of British society—persisting recession, deindustrialization, widespread indebtedness, unemployment, homelessness and a despair recently materialized in riots and criminal sprees by people casually called Calibans by this country's "social pathology" theorists—exposes the failure of the present political regime to offer any fundamental choices. It has also provoked opposition to the first-past-the-post, winner-grabs-all political system, since the author of our miseries, the rabidly right-wing Thatcher government, never won more than 44 percent of the vote.

While the demand for change is growing everywhere, it takes an especially vigorous form in Scotland. More than a decade ago a majority there voted for the establishment of an autonomous Scottish Assembly. Instead it got continuing rule from London by a government whose support in Scotland has often been far below 20 percent. Today only nine of Scotland's seventy-two M.P.s are Conservative, a number that could easily drop to five in the next election. With the exception of the Conservatives all Scottish parties now support a separate Scottish Assembly as a step toward either the "devo-

Robin Blackburn is editor of New Left Review.

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lution" of much of Westminster's power to Edinburgh or outright independence.

In England and Wales as well there is a feeling that Britain's *ancien régime* has something to do with our economic pains. The mummery of monarchy and the House of Lords, along with their equivalents in the boardrooms and City, have fatally undercut successive attempts to modernize, whether by Harold Wilson or Margaret Thatcher. The Treasury, with its close City links, has exercised a stranglehold over the sort of infrastructural public spending and investment in human capital that would be needed for modernization. The "Thatcher miracle" has left Britain about where it was in 1979, only with more severe social problems and a weaker economy, despite government revenues of some $150 billion from North Sea oil since then. The Scots, not surprisingly, think they could make better use of the oil money if they were self-governing.

British people used to think their democracy led the world. But economic decline and the experience of secretive and arbitrary government are sapping this confidence. The relatively greater openness of the U.S. system is widely admired—indeed probably exaggerated, as the major parties compete in promising Freedom of Information bills and the like.

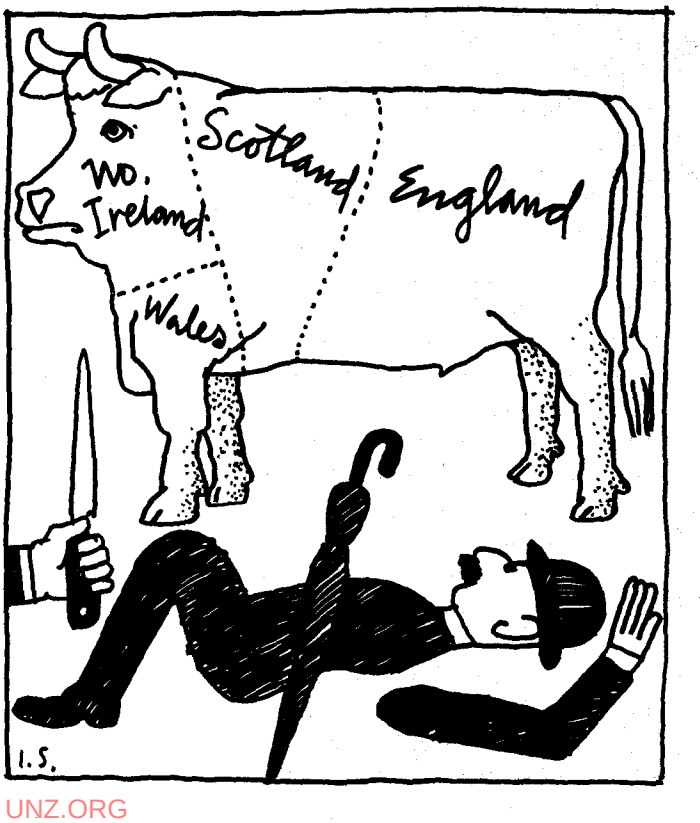
At its last convention the Labor Party committed itself to establishing a Scottish Assembly and to exploring electoral reform, including abolition of the House of Lords and consideration of proportional representation. Those actions follow on the calculation that Labor may need to do a postelection deal with the Liberal Democrats, who would hold the balance in a hung Parliament. Recent polls and by-elections suggest it is unlikely that Labor could put Mr. Kinnock in Downing Street by itself. But Labor's sudden interest in reform also acknowledges widespread public dissatisfaction with arrogant government and an unfair electoral system.

The way the system is rigged, it takes ten times as many votes to elect a Liberal as to elect a Conservative, while Greens or socialists do not make it into Parliament at all unless disguised as Nationalists or Labor M.P.s. In recent elections an alliance of center parties got between a fifth and a quarter of the votes but less than 5 percent of the seats in Parliament. In the last European elections Britain's Greens received more votes than their sister parties elsewhere but not a single representative. All this contributes to a mediocre two-party system that fails to reflect a far more varied society. The two parties are themselves coalitions, a condition that discourages the elaboration of clear programs.

Labor remains cautious in its constitutional proposals. It prefers its familiar complaints about government handling of the economy or the health service to specific commitments to proportional representation—which would be harder to renege upon and would likely destroy its monopoly on left politics. The cause of political reform has been thrust on the national agenda, against the party's wishes, by a distinctive movement of opinion, Charter 88. It has attracted the support of 27,000 people, with a wide variety of professional expertise, calling for electoral reform, a Bill of Rights, a written constitution and devolution for Scotland. While the Charter appeals mainly to liberals and the left, its convention in Manchester in early November was attended by some Conservative pundits and strategists, like Ferdinand Mount, editor of the *Times Literary Supplement* and formerly an adviser to Thatcher. Mount does not endorse the Charter but does favor a written constitution, a position shared by neoconservatives like Frank Vibert of the Institute of Economic Affairs, also attending, who thinks Britain's system gives the ruling party too much power.

Also present at Manchester was the left-wing Labor M.P. Tony Benn, arguing that Britain had succeeded in grafting new concentrations of power—created by modern communications and computer technology—onto the inherited oligarchic structure of a monarchical state. He urged the Charter supporters to take on broad demands for accountability and visibility in the exercise of power—in the media and corporations as well as in government. This message was well received by the respectable types thronging Whitworth Hall, a setting that might have evoked historic assemblies against slavery or the Corn Laws.

Benn has also pointed out that the patronage and privileges of government allow it great powers of manipulation even when it faces an opposition with more guts than Kinnock's Labor Party. The House of Commons was given only a very belated and indirect opportunity to discuss British participation in the Gulf War, in a motion to adjourn the House. The looming constitutional crisis itself has not been addressed. Northern Ireland's troubles continue to fester, and nothing is more likely to empty the House than a debate on Irish issues. The televising of Parliament has made some of the more colorful M.P.s better known, but the most enduring impression is of how poorly attended and pallid the debates are, even on important questions. Members of Parliament are obliged to devote most of their time to complaints brought to them by constituents. Real politics is left to a few party leaders—



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and to unelected officials, appointed without any public scrutiny. Only in October did it become legal even to publish the name of the head of the Secret Services, the organization remaining exempt from parliamentary oversight.

Some in the British left, perhaps the majority, are not apt to get excited about constitutional and legal issues. They argue that socialists should concentrate their fire upon the fundamental oppressions that constitute actually existing capitalism in Britain. But political arrangements and legal rights do have a substantial impact upon the ability of anticapitalist and egalitarian movements to organize and reach a wider public. Britain's electoral system was built to give representation to property and place, and not to reflect fairly the spectrum of political ideas and social values. The first-past-the-post scheme has secured vast power for recent right-wing governments and has foreclosed all radical ideological challenges to the system. Labor, conceived of as a particular interest within the system, has been able to exclude the sort of new left ideas that have representation in many European parliaments.

Old empires have broken apart. Could it now be the U.K.'s turn?

In any case, it is formal changes in Europe, and in the economy as a result, that will have the most jarring impact on British government, demanding that comfortable old ways be abandoned, however troubling that may be for the traditional elites of Whitehall and Westminster. The myth of parliamentary sovereignty actually grants a huge domain to the civil service. But European integration is changing the locus of decision making and is posing in a new way the questions of democratic accountability and social provision.

Of course the European Community itself labors under a "democratic deficit," but at least that is widely acknowledged. The governments of most member states are committed to giving some powers to the European Parliament, and despite Britain's stubborn rear-guard action, this cannot be indefinitely resisted. It will be difficult for any British government to organize another Euro-election under the blatantly unfair electoral system.

Jacques Delors, Socialist president of the European Commission, the executive branch of the European Community, has recognized that one of the distinctive features of the Continent's political culture is the strength of the labor movement. In an attempt to make political and monetary union palatable, he has urged that it be accompanied by a Social Charter to insure that "social dumping" does not prevail in the newly unified market. Britain's Conservatives have roundly denounced the Social Charter as "socialism by the back door," providing for social insurance, regulation of hours and conditions of work, a minimum wage, maternity leave and the election of workers' representatives to the boards of public companies.

However things turn out at Maastricht, Britain would find its exclusion from vital new arrangements, relating to the currency or foreign policy, unacceptable. On the other hand, if it opts into the new Europe, it will find it has to yield up powers now exercised by its own ruling institutions.

A European Commission fully accountable to the European Parliament is a nightmare for a large posse of Conservatives, since this combination would have the legitimacy to take on the European Community's Council of Ministers and win. The Conservative front bench would like to keep power in the Council of Ministers and to retain for each national government a veto over any important matter. This setup gives the ordinary Westminster M.P. at least the illusion of power, since Parliament nominally puts the ministers in their positions in the first place. For the ministers the situation is even better, since they are, in reality, answerable for their actions neither to the European Parliament nor to the national parliament.

Quite apart from politicians' professional distaste for democratic improvements, Conservative opinion in Britain is well aware that the Socialists are the largest group in the European Parliament—and that there is quite a pocket of Greens, Communists and other riffraff as well. When the future of Europe has to be faced, the tabloids run elegant slogans like "Up Yours, Delors" on their front pages. In a similar vein, Peter Lilley, the Trade Minister, recently labored a punning reference to "Delorean economics," comparing the Commission president's schemes to those of the bankrupt and convicted auto designer and drug dealer.

When it comes to foreign and military policy the British government is utterly opposed to pooling its power of decision with Europe. Both the Falklands expedition and the British contingent in the Gulf War would have failed to obtain Community backing. British governments, basing themselves on the "royal prerogative," have extraordinary warmaking powers that would be inhibited if they had to be subordinated to, or concerted with, Community deliberations.

In the midst of all this, Westminster moves along amateurishly, its proceedings having yet to catch up with the present century, let alone anticipate the next. While an atavistic event like the Falklands War gave the parliamentarians a field day, the problems of the present and future arouse too much uneasiness to be squarely confronted. Leaders of both parties have strictly rationed debate on Europe: Six hours were allowed at the end of 1990, and this past November two late sessions were set aside to debate a deliberately vague and ambiguous motion. Both Conservative and Labor Party managers fear that more extensive and pointed discussion would simply reveal the yawning differences that exist within each party. Most recently Margaret Thatcher has argued that there must be a national referendum on Europe if the government is to "surrender" to monetary or political union. In belated acknowledgment of the flaws in our system she fears that all parties will converge, offering the voters "no choice."

And if, in turn, the voters give no party a majority? In the case of a hung Parliament the Queen will have to take awkward decisions. Britain's monarch nominally exercises ultimate authority through the royal prerogative—declaring war, making and unmaking governments, appointing officials. As long as one party controls the House of Commons this suits the leader of the ruling party, since he or she simply tells the

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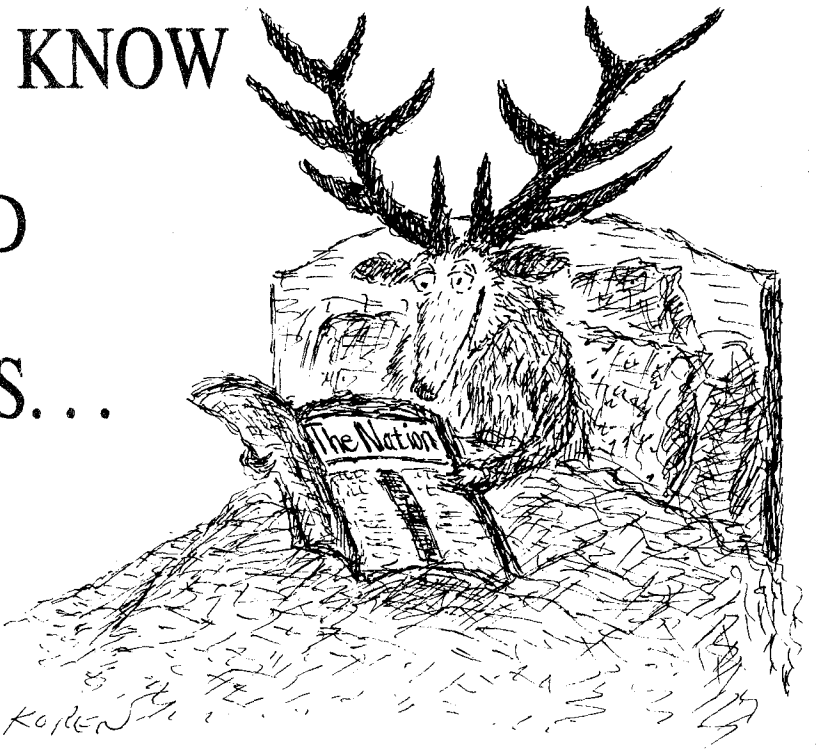

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monarch what to do. But what happens when there is no parliamentary majority? Or what will happen in the case of some future conflict between the Commons and an elected Upper House, or between Westminster and Edinburgh?

While the looming threats to Britain can be easily identified, their resolution is impossible to predict. Will they only concern the shape of representative institutions, or will they reach out to put in question the modalities of power within the state and the economy? Over the past decade democratic ferment has swept parts of the Communist world and Third World, sometimes to be frustrated or diverted but always with results that have confounded expectations. Likewise, old empires and national federations have broken apart. Could it now be the turn of the formerly United Kingdom, which simply is not a late-twentieth-century democracy or nation-state but rather the relic of an early modern empire? Perhaps it is about time. As Charter 88 has pointed out, Britain's ruling institutions retain the essential structure given them by the Glorious Revolution of 1688. If that venerable structure is at last taken out of service, this will, like those recent events that have suddenly made British arrangements look their age, have a similar effect on that brilliant monument to the mind of the eighteenth-century American gentleman—the Constitution of the United States. □

LETTER FROM EUROPE

Le Pen's Pals—Blood and Soil

DANIEL SINGER

There are two unmistakable signs that France is entering a pre-electoral period: The government is once again tinkering with the electoral law and the politicians, particularly the leaders of the right, are competing with Jean-Marie Le Pen for his turf, pandering to the lowest racist instincts of the French people. All this is taking place very early. The regional elections, to be held throughout France next spring, are, after all, but a dress rehearsal. The general parliamentary election in the spring of 1993 will be the real test. It will determine whether Francois Mitterrand will have a fairly free hand in the last couple of years of his presidential term or whether he will have to put up with yet another period of undesired "cohabitation" with a government of a different political complexion. The parliamentary test and presidential prospect already cast their shadow over French politics.

That the Socialists want to do something about the way people vote is not surprising. Mass demonstrations, strikes and opinion polls all confirm the extent of popular discontent. The farmers, once the backbone of semirural France, now fighting for survival, were recently the most violent, intercepting trucks loaded with imported meat and attacking public buildings. But when their passion is spent, the farmers are pillars of property and tend to vote for the right. More worrying for the Socialists have been the mass demonstrations by nurses and other medical staff and the obvious dissatisfaction of teachers, of other public servants and of industrial workers, that is to say, of their own constituency.

Mitterrand's gamble this past May in appointing for the first time in France a woman as Prime Minister did not come off. Poor Edith Cresson, admittedly no great captain, is criticized much more strongly than she would be if she were a man. She was in fact asked to perform a miracle: to win support for the government without altering its policy. Pierre Bérégovoy was left at the Ministry of Finance as the keeper of orthodoxy, praised by *The Wall Street Journal* and *The Economist* for keeping the franc strong. But for the French public this same policy spelled austerity, with high unemployment and virtually frozen wages. It is difficult to see why the left-wing electorate should be delighted because its government is carrying out the policy of its opponents and, therefore, hard to imagine the left getting a new parliamentary mandate in 1993.

Actually, the problem for Mitterrand is not so much how to make the Socialists win. It is how to prevent the right from scoring an outright victory, and this is where electoral reform comes in. The present French system of majority rule in single-member constituencies tends to amplify swings. A degree of proportional representation would minimize this movement. It would have the additional advantage of forcing the respectable right to face once again, as it did in 1986, the question of its relations with Le Pen's xenophobic National Front. Unfortunately, some conservatives are ready to make a pact with the Devil for the sake of office.

'Le Pen in Silk Stockings'

Jacques Chirac, former prime minister and Mitterrand's unlucky rival in the last presidential poll, was first to show how far they were ready to go. In a speech, the leader of the ex-Gaullist Rally for the Republic (R.P.R.) went out of his way to express his understanding of an ordinary French citizen's exasperation when faced with "the noise and the smells" of immigrant neighbors. The speech was stinking in its own right, but Chirac, whose party is competing with the National Front for the vote, could at least pretend that he had been misunderstood because he was improvising.

Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, the former president of France and proud of his sophistication, cannot invoke even such a phony excuse. His reference to the foreign "invasion" was made in a well-considered text about immigration. France, like many other countries, transmits nationality through *jus sanguinis* (the law of the blood) to children of French nationals or through *jus soli* (the law of the soil) to those born in France. The bourgeois republic, though not always for lofty reasons (a low birthrate, the demand for cheap labor), developed a rather open policy on immigration, claiming it was inspired by the universal principles of the French Revolution. The centralism inherited from the revolutionary Jacobins had as its counterpart a great capacity for assimilation; if the

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Nazis' rule that one grandparent made you a Jew were now applied to foreign origin in France, about a quarter of the French population would have to be treated as alien. It is this tradition that Giscard now proposes to give up. France should stick to the law of the blood, to kith-and-kin and all that ethnic stuff because its identity is allegedly threatened by the foreign "invasion."

Epigrammatic for once, Cresson thereupon described the former president as a "Le Pen in silk stockings," an insult particularly biting if one recalls that she was paraphrasing a remark attributed to Napoleon about the chameleonic Prince Talleyrand: "shit in a silk stocking." In this case, any insult was deserved. The only foreigners Giscard knows are bankers, members of the jet set or the nobility listed in the Gotha (though his own d'Estaing has been questioned), and xenophobia is probably not one of his vices. He made this pitch for purely political purposes, to win some reactionary votes and thus defeat Jacques Chirac in the presidential primaries of the right. But "honorable" politicians like himself, who make racism respectable, are in a sense more pernicious than Le Pen.

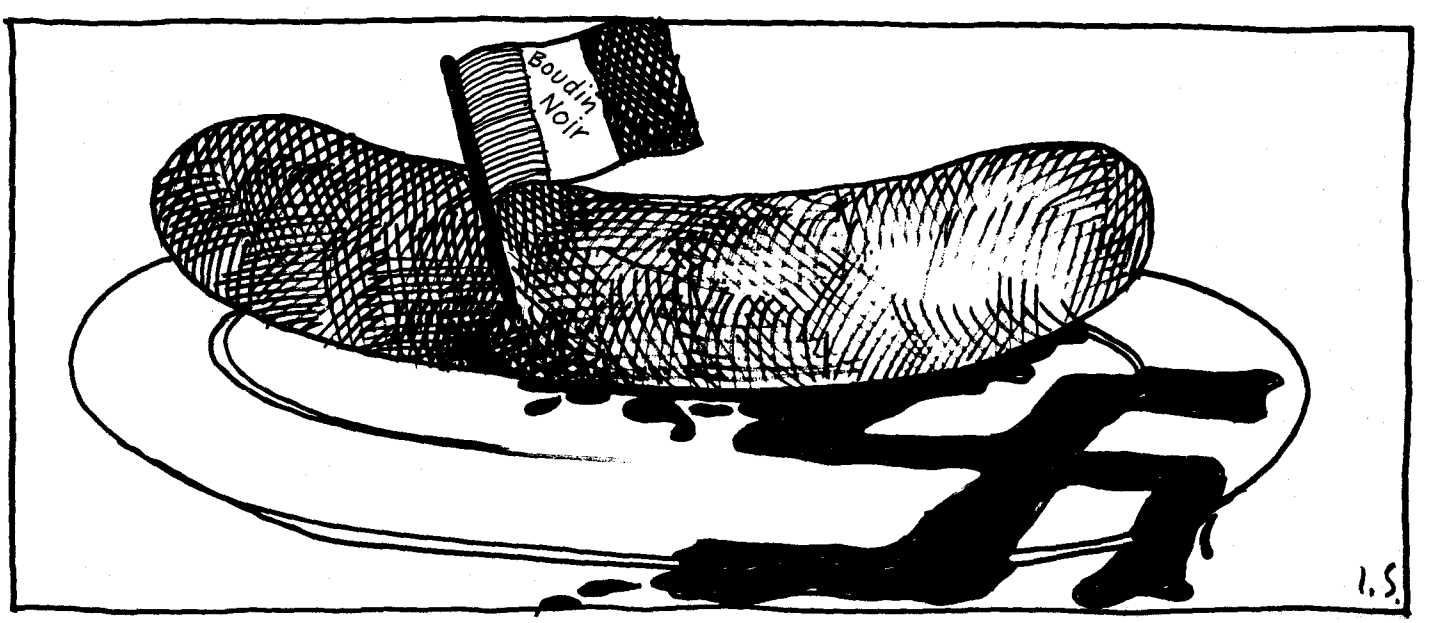
As long as the economic crisis does not become catastrophic there is no serious risk of a Le Pen coming to power anywhere in Western Europe. In the next French elections, in the worst scenario, the National Front could conquer one region, that of Provence–Côte d'Azur, which includes Marseilles and Nice. That would be morally shameful but not politically tragic. As things stand, the Front has no prospect of winning a parliamentary majority and its leader not an earthly chance of becoming president. And yet the disease is spreading throughout society. In the most recent poll nearly one-third of the French people said they agreed with Le Pen's views on immigration; a year ago it was 18 percent. Politicians like Chirac and Giscard are carriers of the infection.

Jingoist germs are actually spreading throughout Europe. In last October's Swiss general election, the party showing the biggest progress (from two to eight seats) was the xenophobic Partie des Automobilistes (Party of Car-Drivers), which advocates deploying troops on the frontier to stop illegal immigrants. And in the November election in Vienna the anti-immigration Freedom Party nearly tripled its representation in municipal government. More worrying are the cases of foreigner bashing and arson in Germany, particularly in the former East Germany, where immigrants are few and far between. This incidentally confirms that the so-called theory of a "threshold of tolerance," beyond which the increase in the number of foreigners provokes a rejection, has nothing to do with science and is pure propaganda. These indeed are symptoms of the inner sickness of a society, like the anti-Semitism without Jews in Poland. As the nationalist tide is rising in Europe, two perturbing thoughts come to mind: First, people need ideas transcending their immediate preoccupations, and the void left by the provisional discrediting of socialism is being filled by ghosts from the past, giving scope to the priest and the jingoist preacher; second, in Eastern Europe, where the economic situation is catastrophic, the triumph of a Le Pen cannot be ruled out. But these are thoughts that can only be mentioned, not developed, in a brief entry in a diary.

Blood and Business

Blood, in the meantime, has hit the headlines in a gruesome scandal involving contaminated transfusions. Several thousand patients, many of them hemophiliacs, were literally sentenced to death, at least some of them through a mixture of ignorance, bureaucracy and greed. Since the matter is sub judice, with four important figures in the world of transfusion already indicted, we shall limit the description to well-established facts.

Around 1983, specialists began worrying about the transmission of HIV through blood transfusions. Research was then pursued in two directions: a hunt for tests to detect at once the virus in donated blood, and a search for methods to purify that blood (notably through heating). But with the whole problem of AIDS underestimated, not enough money was spent on the effort. By March 1985, when unfortunately the bulk of the damage had been done, two facts were obvious in Paris: that the French stock of blood was contami-



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nated and that nearly safe purified blood could be purchased from abroad. Yet four more months were needed for the authorities to draw the obvious conclusion from this state of things.

All those incriminated—scientists, managers and politicians—now plead that their knowledge was incomparably smaller six years ago than it is now; then eminent scientists were asserting, for instance, that only one out of ten people testing HIV positive would develop AIDS. This does not explain, however, why blood known to be contaminated continued to be used. It was not only a question of scientific ignorance; it was also one of getting rid of stocks, of beating the foreign competition—in short, of avoiding financial loss. People are now beginning to ask questions about indemnity payments for the victims (as if their suffering could be compensated), about the misbehavior of the administrators and the responsibility of the politicians. The scandal has only begun.

Some commentators have seized the occasion to prove that, morally, the public sector is no better than the private. The French system is dominated by the National Center of Blood Transfusion, which is state-sponsored and relies on voluntary donors. But on this principled and voluntary foundation a huge enterprise dealing with blood, run on commercial lines, was erected—a capitalist venture with high-salaried managers ready to take on foreign competition. It is this superstructure that is responsible for the current crisis.

A deeper lesson can be drawn from this scandal. There was a time when the public sector was supposed to have a logic and rationality of its own, different from the private. Public ownership of the means of production or, better, their socialization was supposed to extend that rationality so that it would dominate society. In recent years, throughout the Western world and by now in the Eastern bloc too, this reasoning has been reversed. State property is tolerated if it is run on business lines and guided by profit. If the whole story were not so tragic, it would be fun watching French editorialists, usually champions of private enterprise, deploring the extension of its logic to the domain of health. If those schizophrenic writers genuinely believe that you can have a fully commercialized society with a few moral islands within it, they must believe in Santa Claus.

Business and Literature

Christmas shopping is crucial for booksellers, and that is why November is the month of that uniquely French commercial circus, the awarding of literary prizes. The most famous of these is the Goncourt, founded by the two literary brothers and awarded since 1903. The next best known is the Renaudot, set up by literary journalists fed up with waiting while the Goncourt academicians were making up their minds over lunch at the Drouant restaurant in Paris, where the ceremony still takes place. Add the Médicis, the Femina (with only women in the jury) and the Interallié, and you get the main prizes for allegedly the best fiction of the year.

The actual prizes are modest. The winner of the Goncourt, for example, gets a check for 50 francs, less than $10. In fact, he gets a small fortune. Since you can give that book to your provincial aunt or to wherever you go for dinner, since television, radio and the press publicize the event and bookshops display the lucky winner, a Goncourt is sure to sell at least 100,000 copies (these were roughly the sales of *Saint Germain ou la Négociation*, crowned in 1958, which sank without a trace). A book that is already doing well has its sales greatly boosted; thus *The Lover* by Marguerite Duras climbed from 250,000 to nearly a million after the award. The other prizes have a lesser but still important impact. A book that would be selling in the thousands sells in the tens of thousands.

With so much money at stake, publishers are madly interested. This literary lottery is dominated by a strange animal called by critics Galligrasseuil, a collective name for three big publishers—Gallimard, Grasset and Le Seuil. The big three hog all the prizes and occasionally leave a bone for another publisher when the outcry over manipulation becomes too loud. How do they do it? Writers, too, are human. A majority of the ten members of the Goncourt Academy were for a long time connected with Gallimard. Now three of them are linked with Grasset. And publishers have many ways of influencing their writers.

And yet the bias is, probably, not the worst feature of the system. At this time of year, it is a customary game to recall the names of famous writers who didn't get the Goncourt. But, on the whole, the record is not too bad. The trouble is that this prize giving is only part of a general process of commercial concentration, with publishers merging and being taken over by banks, with independent bookstores disappearing and distributors insisting on a quick turnover and a small number of best sellers. To which one is tempted to reply that this is happening everywhere and that it is better to sell a good number of fairly decent books than nonbooks or no books at all.

I suddenly realize the reason for a note of disenchantment I occasionally detect in my own writing. With the moneybags and the philistines gaining ground spectacularly, we are often forced not to present our own alternative but to take a stand for the lesser evil, for a barely liberal immigration policy attacked by the National Front, for a rather mediocre welfare state wrecked by champions of deregulation, for a more or less decent commercial literature threatened by real trash. The reason for the wistfulness is, as Cecil Day Lewis put it, "That we who lived by honest dreams/Defend the bad against the worse." One hopes not for very long. □

EDITORIALS.

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qualify him for millions in federal matching funds and millions more toward a 1996 third party bid by him or some other progressive leader.

One strength of the Nader crusade, candidacy or not, is that he draws support from all over the political spectrum. Of 130 people at the Nashua Y who pledged to write in Nader, nearly half said they were independents, and the remainder split evenly between Republicans and Democrats. The McLeans are typical. When I asked Alan why he wasn't interested in voting for Pat Buchanan, he said, "I think we need a bigger protest."

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BOOKS & THE ARTS.

Beyond Pearl Harbor

NORMA FIELD

Growing up in postwar Japan, I didn't give much thought to Pearl Harbor Day. There was a great deal of emphasis in American schools in those days about all the children being good ambassadors from the United States to Japan. Besides, there wasn't much need, especially after the Tokyo War Crimes Trials (1946-48), for continuing to reproach so crushed an enemy with its act of "infamy." And more important, the United States had "reversed" its goals for the occupation of Japan from demilitarization and democratization to economic revitalization in the interests of its own global agenda. Japan accordingly became the "pillar of freedom" in the Far East. This meant that on the Japanese side, especially among the leadership, consisting in part of war criminals undergoing rapid rehabilitation, there was little motivation to bring up Pearl Harbor.

When I did think of it, Pearl Harbor seemed to me a boys' subject, the stuff of military history. Ignorant then of the injustice visited upon Japanese-Americans and Japanese-Canadians in the aftermath of the attack, unable and perhaps unwilling to consider some 2,400 American deaths produced that December morning (not to mention the millions of Asians slaughtered in the years preceding and following that morning), I identified effortlessly with the August memorializing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Communal victimization is a potent ingredient for ritual, and these were the victims closer to me, many of them children, along with ordinary women and men of all ages.

The issue of victimization accounts in part, though only in part, for the asymmetry of interest in Pearl Harbor vis-à-vis Hiroshima and Nagasaki on either side of the Pacific. (The extent of this asymmetry on the Japanese side can be crudely gauged by library computer searches that yield nearly 1,800 items in Japanese available in this country under the entries "Hiroshima" and "Nagasaki," in contrast to seventeen under "Pearl Harbor" specifically, 130 under "outbreak of war.") Still, a Pearl Harbor = Hiroshima frame has existed ever since the first bomb was dropped, bolstered by rightful vengeance on the one side and meek acceptance on the other. With altered accents, this framing is now being revived as Americans demonstrate the human propensity to find meaning in big round units of time, an impulse reinforced on this occasion by the thematic doubling of economic and military victimization. Some Japanese, for their part, have been eager with proposals for mutual apology and/or forgetfulness.

Progressive historians of the postwar period were committed to elaborating the disastrous consequences of emperor-state fascism.

Even if we set aside the crucial incommensurability of the events at Pearl Harbor and Hiroshima, we have to note another difficulty with the "Pearl Harbor = Hiroshima" formulation—its crucial omission of Asia. This abbreviation repeats the history of the conflict underlying the formula, a history in which Asia served and continues to serve Japanese and American interests.

The shifting mixture of pride, shame and anxiety evoked by that conflict is underscored in Japanese publications and memorial inscriptions by the use of two contending terms, the Pacific War and the Greater East Asia War. The former has been adopted by those professing mainstream to progressive views and the latter by conservatives and right-wingers (although it also appears on relatively new state-maintained memorials). It is, however, a third, distinctly minority option, the Fifteen-Year War, that is historically more appropriate than either. It encompasses the period from 1931, when the Manchurian "Incident" led to the establishment of the puppet state of Manchukuo (under the "Last Emperor") in northeastern China, through 1937, when the China "Incident" (more commonly known in English as the Marco Polo Bridge "Incident") led to extended Sino-Japanese hostilities, and finally, the years 1941-45, when Japan confronted the United States as well as the European colonial powers, notably Britain, in Southeast Asia and the Pacific islands. (Those who continue to complain that Pearl Harbor was attacked prior to a formal declaration of war would do well to note that Japan never got around to declaring war against China through all the "incidents" it provoked. In any case, the formal declaration of war before the initiation of hostilities has become all but quaint in modern history: We have only to remember Korea, Vietnam and the Persian Gulf.)

The Japanese historiography of Pearl Harbor and the Fifteen-Year War it so dramatically punctuated reflects the contradictory character of the postwar U.S.-Japan relationship. Remembering the "Yankee Go Home" signs of the 1950s and the 1960 anti-U.S./Japan Security Treaty demonstrations that were so intense they prevented the visit of President Eisenhower, I am struck by the relative uninterest of the Japanese historians of the Pacific War, especially those who began writing in the fifties and sixties, in the work of revisionist American historians. The latter showed that, given Roosevelt's desire to overcome American isolationism, Pearl Harbor could not have been a complete surprise for the President and his closest associates. (The revisionist argument is memorably encapsulated in War Secretary Henry Stimson's diary entry for November 25, 1941: "The question was how we should maneuver them into the position of firing the first shot without allowing too much danger to ourselves.") These Japanese historians, however, were uninterested in having their compatriots exculpated from charges of having perpetrated a "sneak attack" or, more important, in critiquing American as well as Japanese responsibility for the steps leading to Pearl Harbor.

Rather, the distinguished progressive historians of the postwar period—figures such as Masao Maruyama, Saburo Ienaga, Shozo Fujita and Akira Fujiwara — were first and foremost committed to elaborating the disastrous consequences of emperor-state fascism for both Japanese citizens and their fellow Asians. It is worth noting that while these Japanese do not exploit the findings of Charles

Norma Field teaches Japanese literature at the University of Chicago and is the author of In the Realm of a Dying Emperor *(Pantheon).*

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Beard, there is a symmetry of emphasis between them and that eminent American revisionist. His *President Roosevelt and the Coming of the War, 1941* (1948), rather than castigating Japanese imperialism, single-mindedly pursues the noxious implications for the American people of their leaders' decision-making procedures leading to Pearl Harbor.

One of the most useful of the relatively small body of writings by this group of Japanese historians available in English is Saburo Ienaga's *Japan's Last War: World War II and the Japanese, 1931-45* (1979). Through its steady focus on the costs of the forced rapid industrialization and concomitant militarization that characterize the modern history of Japan, the book offers a valuable introduction to the background of Pearl Harbor. Determined not to be devoured by the West as had the other Asian countries, especially China, Japan decided to become a devourer itself. This it did with astonishing initial success (the Sino-Japanese War of 1894-95, the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-5, the annexation of Korea in 1910), even earning a degree of recognition from Western predators in the form of treaties and alliances. Inevitably, however, the pupil's success put him in competition with his teachers. Japanese imperialism, like that of others, set in motion a logic of perpetual expansion whereby the conquest of Manchuria in 1931 became necessary (and therefore justified) in order to safeguard the spoils of earlier battles, which led inexorably to penetration into the Chinese heartland, an adventure that Japan could neither translate into victory nor cut short to minimize losses. The solution became—only too predictably—further expansion, this time to the Pacific and to Southeast Asia and full-fledged war with the Allied powers.

Ienaga's evaluation of this history is as follows:

> If Japan had been a champion of Asian nationalism, had really desired independence and progress for its neighbor, and had joined with China to liberate Asia from Western imperialism, the subsequent history of the region would have been vastly different. . . . Unfortunately, Japanese leaders . . . competed with the West for a place at the imperialist table and a slice of the Chinese melon.

This position, of course, distinguishes him from the rightist historians and philosophers of the Greater East Asia War who continue to claim for it an emancipatory, anticolonial intent. It also distinguishes him, albeit more subtly, from the mainstream scholars of diplomatic history and international relations who have painstakingly analyzed the rhythms of activity by hard-liners and moderates on both sides of the Pacific. While those efforts have yielded invaluable information, their very productivity threatens to give the impression that a little push here, a little tug there (by tougher Japanese moderates silencing army belligerents and gentler American hard-liners restraining their own desires to cripple the Japanese economy) might have yielded a more reasonable solution than the scandalous human waste unleashed by Pearl Harbor—as if unrestrained global competition for the possession of other people's resources and labor, that is to say, for colonies, could ever yield a rational solution.

That moment of triumph over the United States justified everything that preceded it.

The lack of reflection by progressive Japanese historians on the racist manipulation by Americans of the "sneak attack" remains a mystery and a disappointment, perhaps an indication of narcissistic self-berating at the expense of a more cosmopolitan critique. This is why the more thoughtful of the Greater East Asia writings are still worth studying. Their authors understood the profound impossibility of Japan's position as a latecomer to the world stage of modernity and talked about it as "the tragic fate of Japan," in the words of philosopher Tetsuro Watsuji (1889-1960). Now Japan's "fate," though distinctive, is hardly unique. Not only Germany but those parts of the globe until recently compartmentalized as the Second and Third Worlds, not to mention minorities within the United States, have confronted and continue to face the monumental disadvantages of belatedness. Still, precisely because the Japanese plight is neither unique nor past, we should examine it in order to sense how the political-economic oppressiveness of Western modernity was experienced culturally.

By the 1930s many Japanese intellectuals who were steeped in Continental culture, especially in German Idealist philosophy, came to feel irreducibly second-class, condemned to be the objects and never the equal subjects of intellectual practices developed in the West. In reaction, many of them not only turned their intellectual energies to the elaboration of a distinctive Japanese culture but supported the practical efforts of bureaucrats and military leaders to overturn Western domination.

Novelist and onetime Marxist, friend and sometime mentor to Yukio Mishima, Fusao Hayashi (1903-1975) is a case in point. Purged as a right-wing militarist by the Occupation (which subsequently purged some 13,000 Japanese on suspicion of Communist affiliation), he went on to publish a two-volume *Affirmation of the Greater East Asia War* in the sixties. Hayashi's astonishingly witty affirmation is controversial across the political spectrum. Even postwar Greater East Asianists would modify his claim that, "although the Greater East Asia War seemed, in form, to be a war of aggression, it was in essence a war of liberation." They would agree that the Sino-Japanese and Russo-Japanese wars were undertaken in self-defense and, furthermore, had positive effects on anticolonial struggles in China and India, but they argue that the subsequent annexation of Korea and the various China incidents were the work of runaway militarists who distorted the defensive/emancipatory agenda. Hayashi's response was that the Manchuria and China incidents were the *result*, not the *cause*, of the war between the United States and Japan. That war, he claimed, began with the 1905 Portsmouth (New Hampshire) Treaty ending the Russo-Japanese War, a treaty embodying Theodore Roosevelt's imperialist and increasingly anti-Japanese agenda.

The argument that the Fifteen-Year War represented Japan's effort to lead the people of Asia to freedom from Western domination was made most poignantly by distinguished China scholar Yoshimi Takeuchi (1910-77) in a proclamation titled "The Greater East Asia War and Our Resolve," written eight days after Pearl Harbor. Given that Takeuchi had already spent two years in China and was committed to the study of Chinese culture not in a spirit of antiquarianism but as a means of revitalizing Japanese literature and thought, it is not surprising to find him deeply ambivalent on the China Incident.

All the clouds were dispelled, however, on December 8, when "history was made. The world was transformed overnight. Our heads trembling with emotion, we

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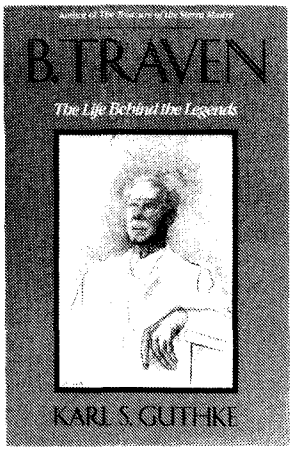
watched the passing, like a rainbow, of a single ray of light." That moment of triumph over the United States justified everything that preceded it, but interestingly enough, Takeuchi never refers to that enemy. He is preoccupied by the fate of Japan and Asia and proclaims, "Henceforth, each of us will do our modest utmost to deliver East Asia into a new world order."

Less than one year later, Takeuchi was to decline to participate in the Greater East Asia Writers Congress. Perhaps he had begun to entertain doubts as to how many Chinese living in the China he loved believed in the emancipatory character of the new Japanese world order. Of course, he could have asked himself how emancipatory a Japanese program for other Asians could be when it had been so ruthlessly repressive for Japanese. Indeed, it is virtually impossible to find any contemporary writing critical of the Pearl Harbor attack because a police state had not only insured that no such writing would be published but, more important, had all but eliminated the very impulse to be critical. For good measure, the few dissident writers not in prison at the time of Pearl Harbor were placed in preventive detention. Takeuchi's unqualified enthusiasm for Pearl Harbor was widely echoed by other intellectuals. Their exuberant confidence contrasts markedly with the more realistic uncertainty of top military and government leaders as late as the fall of 1941.

A scant two months before Pearl Harbor, a number of navy leaders, including Admiral Yamamoto, who would direct the attack, were skeptical of Japan's chances in the event of protracted conflict because of America's vastly superior resources. Prime Minister Konoe was himself reluctant to take the country to war but, along with War Minister Tojo, he refused to consider the alternative insisted upon by the United States: withdrawal from China. Contrary to original expectations, Japanese forces had become hopelessly mired in the continent. Yet, as we know, the leadership resolved on a quick initial victory over the United States. Willful (and wishful) illogic substituted for hardheaded planning for the long struggle that men like Admiral Yamamoto were convinced lay ahead.

In the end, it is hard to find a good answer to the inevitable question of *why* Japan attacked Pearl Harbor. To be sure, Japan's giving up on a continental presence would have meant the renunciation



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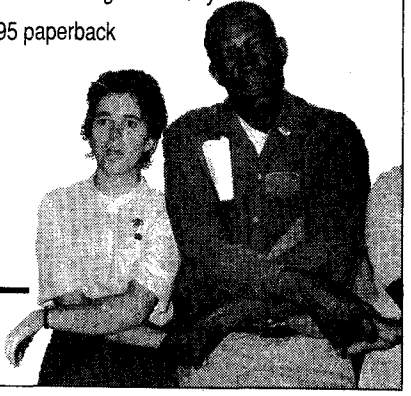

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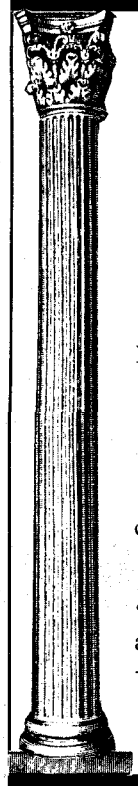

AN EDUCATION IN GEORGIA
Charlayne Hunter, Hamilton Holmes, and the Integration of the University of Georgia
BY CALVIN TRILLIN
Foreword by Charlayne Hunter-Gault

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of a half-century of national aspiration to approach parity with the Western colonizers. Japan would, essentially, have had to become in 1941 what it would be in August 1945 minus the devastation of the air raids and the atomic bombs. It is evidently impossible for nations to cede territorial claims, regardless of the cost to their own citizens (much less to others), so long as there are the slimmest hopes for continued possession. To the extent that Japan had been forced to sustain a long and exhausting war mediated by a massive propaganda machine that left no doubt of eventual success, even the skeptics could not imagine pulling back. Suspension of disbelief became crucial.

As if to compensate in advance for material lack, literature was enormously important to the Japanese war effort from the beginning. If the United States sent Hollywood stars out to entertain the troops, Japan sent writers to produce sympathetic accounts for the home readership. A sizable body of "war literature" was the result, to become a source of considerable ambivalence and outright embarrassment after 1945.

Poetry was the pre-eminent medium, especially the thirty-one-syllable, thousand-year-old tanka form, which combined the appeal of elevating, unique tradition and wide accessibility. Not only established practitioners but housewives and foot soldiers as well as the Emperor and Admiral Yamamoto recorded their experiences in this genre. Perhaps the best remembered poet from this period, however, was actually a pioneer of modern Japanese free verse, Kotaro Takamura (1883-1956). Takamura, who may be most familiar to English-speaking readers through his poems on his suicidally schizophrenic wife (*Chieko and Other Poems of Takamura Kotaro*), was the son of a renowned sculptor of wooden Buddhist figures. He spent a formative few years in New York, London and Paris in the first decade of the twentieth century and returned to Japan alienated from his father and his native tradition. Pearl Harbor redeemed him from prodigality:

Grandfather,
Father and Mother
  were there,
as they had been in my childhood.
The mists of my boyhood home
  filled the room.

I must cast myself away.
I must protect His Majesty.
  Discarding poetry,
I shall write poetry.
I shall record.

These lines, from "The Day of Pearl Harbor," as well as many others, prompted scrutiny of Takamura's war guilt in the postwar years. He spent the period of 1945-52 in self-styled exile, reclaiming his reputation. In the 1960s, however, well after his death, the war returned to haunt his memory. The northern hot-springs town where he had spent the first six months of evacuation from Tokyo air raids decided to erect a stone marker with a carving of the poem Takamura composed on August 16, 1945, after hearing the Emperor's message of surrender. The poem, all too embarrassingly titled "The Wailing of One Hundred Million," was even preserved in the poet's own hand in a copy he had given a neighbor. The townspeople wanted to display their ties to greatness (it would not, of course, hurt the hot-springs business); the Takamura Kotaro Society in Tokyo was horrified by this threat to their poet's hard-won redemption. They claimed he would have hated it; the townspeople said that if the master had really disliked the poem, he wouldn't have given copies to three of them.

By 1991, in contrast to this emotional controversy, *Aera*, a weekly magazine published by Japan's most influential daily, the *Asahi*, unapologetically quotes in a Pearl Harbor issue two tanka poems composed in January 1942 by Akiko Yosano (1878-1942). She is a poet who became especially known after the war for her 1904 pacifist poem, "Thou Needst Not Die," addressed to a brother fighting on the Russo-Japanese front. Shortly after Pearl Harbor, however, she composed such poems as

Become a lieutenant
in the navy,
  my Shiro,
fight bravely
in the noble war.

A 1968 study of Yosano asks why a poet of her standing had to write such a "regrettable" poem and finds recourse in the "frightful totalitarianism" of the age. The article in *Aera* calmly refers to her "sensitivity" to the "essence" of each age and wonders how she would have committed the present U.S.-Japan relationship to poetry.

It seems that the Japanese attempt to work through the question of war guilt has finally resulted in its displacement. The focus on writers (and early on, select military figures) is emblematic. The scrutiny of certain public figures, followed by purge (literal or figurative, as in the

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expunging of items from the collected works), then rehabilitation, whereupon the subject is rendered taboo, allowed ordinary citizens dispensation from examining both their own roles in the prewar order and, more important, their complicity with any present-day continuity. In the end, a superficial castigation of representative figures (always with the damaging exception of the Emperor)—a process both reinforced and overwhelmed by the victims' discourse generated by the atomic bombs—made possible the instant, blameless democratization of Japan. It is essential to recall the contribution of the United States to this process.

The critique of emperor-state fascism and the demand for genuine democracy in postwar Japan (the discourse of the progressive historians of the fifties and sixties) needed to be joined to the critique of Western imperialism (the discourse of the Greater East Asianists of the sixties minus the delusions about Asian emancipation). Today, a self-critical recognition of Japanese economic dominance (not only in the United States but in Asia, where an incomparably more successful Co-Prosperity Sphere than existed before is in place) must inform any such synthesis. Such modest signs as decade-old activities by a women's peace group around Pearl Harbor Day rather than the more usual Hiroshima/Nagasaki season, and the decision by a group of Japanese veterans to observe on this December 7 the sixtieth anniversary of the Manchurian Incident as the beginning of aggression in Asia leading to Pearl Harbor, are extremely welcome.

Such impulses, however, will have to struggle for recognition against the American inclination, spurred by economic frustration, to revive the righteous identity of victimhood, which provokes in turn Japanese impatience, now fed by economic smugness. It is entirely imaginable that the current Japanese right, unwilling to be apologetic, will be the ones to exploit early American revisionism on Pearl Harbor. The rhetoric in Japan is susceptible to heating up in proportion to that in the United States. A neologism meaning "dislike of America" litters the pages of newspapers and monthlies. Pointing out resemblances between the intellectual and media climate of today and that of the thirties has become an increasingly popular exercise. While such episodic comparisons purport to serve as warning, they also set in motion a sense of doomed repetition. They certainly cannot substitute for principled structural analysis.

Of course, 1991 is not 1941, and the round number 50 should not trap any of us in such an illusion. Some Japanese worry about the dissolution of the Soviet Union coming in the year of Pearl Harbor's fiftieth anniversary. They fear it will allow Americans to focus their hostilities on Japan. It is an unfortunate coincidence for the psychic health of both countries, but perhaps we can resist the sort of memorializing that exhumes old wounds for the sake of present-day gratification. Instead, we might translate the memories of that painful war into a rational, life-sustaining dialogue. Roughly fifteen years after the war, the distinguished American historian William Appleman Williams concluded *The Tragedy of American Diplomacy* with a plea to replace "the frontier-expansionist explanation of American democracy and prosperity, and the strategy of the Open Door" with the "nerve to fail," by which he meant the will to accept limits to America's freedom of action and to "enhance and extend" democracy within those limits. The Open Door Policy and the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere (strategic variant of the Greater Japanese Empire) were functional equivalents of self-serving deception. A quarter-century later, from the other side of the Pacific, Nobumasa Tanaka echoes Williams in his documentary history of Emperor Showa: What if, he asked, in the months before Pearl Harbor, the Emperor had said, We don't need a Greater Japan, a small Japan will do? □

The Quilt of History

MICHAEL P. JOHNSON

PRAYING FOR SHEETROCK: A Work of Nonfiction. *By Melissa Fay Greene. Addison-Wesley. 337 pp. $21.95.*

"If you weren't careful, he'd be your best friend," white folks in McIntosh County, Georgia, said of High Sheriff Tom Poppell. Sheriffing ran in the Poppell family. Poppell took the job in 1948 when his father, the previous sheriff, died. For the next thirty-one years Tom Poppell sheriffed McIntosh County's 7,000 inhabitants, half of them black and half of them white. Poppell's mother was the county jailer and cooked meals for the prisoners. His sister was the county clerk; his brother, the clerk of the superior court. After Poppell died in 1979, ending the longest sheriff's dynasty in Georgia history, the county commissioners tried to give the job to his wife.

Sheriff Poppell got by on a salary of about $12,000 a year by 1975, but somehow he also came into possession of four houses, one of them with an airfield. By his lights, he took care of people in McIntosh County, and they took care of him. All the blacks in McIntosh County were registered to vote by the 1970s, and they routinely gave Poppell their ballots, just like the whites. Much of what Sheriff Poppell gave back came from Yankees.

In McIntosh County, U.S. Route 17 cuts through the salt marsh and pine forest of coastal Georgia on its way from New York to Miami. Carload after carload of sunseekers from the Northeast stopped at the gift shops and fruit stands that lined the road in the northern part of the county. The visitors got out to stretch their legs and buy a bag of pecans or peaches or Vidalia onions and check out the sign offering "Kosher Ham" or the recipe for "Congealed Coca-Cola Cranberry Salad." Sometimes, while the visitors browsed, their radiators or their tires developed a bad leak that had to be repaired at a gas station just up the road. But as a detective from a nearby town said, "The rule of thumb for catching tourists . . . was: 'You don't outsmart a Yankee. You outdumb him.' "

The real business of the roadside stands was gambling, a felony in Georgia. Offering bleary-eyed tourists a little fun at a seemingly simple game of chance like the notorious razzle-dazzle (an almost unwinnable game played with eight dice), the apparently slow-witted proprietors of the clip joints cheated to permit the tourists to win small and then lose big—and fast. Outdumbed tourists lost their vacation money in fifteen or twenty minutes. If they appealed to the law, the sheriff patiently explained that gambling was illegal and asked if they were confessing to a crime. Back home, safely beyond the reach of Georgia law, thousands of admitted felons complained to the state's governor, but nothing happened.

Michael P. Johnson, chairman of the history department at the University of California, Irvine, is author of a book on antebellum Georgia politics.

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Sheriff Poppell saw to it that Yankee wealth got distributed far beyond the clip-joint owners. Trucks barreled along Route 17 and often crashed in the blinding sea mist that slicked the road. While the sheriff supervised the emergency and cleanup crews, word of a wreck spread quickly among blacks and whites. Orderly and peaceably, they descended on the truck's carcass and picked it clean, carrying away sheetrock or shoes or Snickers while the sheriff looked on benevolently.

Sheriff Poppell's unofficial headquarters was the S&S Truck Stop, a busy place that sold no gas, no Cokes, no cheeseburgers and no fries. A woman at the drinkless bar told an undercover agent, "Honey, the only thing you gon' get here costs thirty-five dollars, and you get it in the back room." From the S&S, Poppell kept an eye on his lucrative interests in prostitution, white slavery, drugs, counterfeiting, fencing stolen property, sheltering criminal fugitives and murder.

Poppell settled scores discreetly, usually keeping the blood and bodies out of sight of the county's hard-working, mostly poor residents. But when the editor of the hometown *Darien News* began to collect detailed testimony from tourists at the clip joints and bring it to the attention of a grand jury and the Atlanta press, an arsonist torched the newspaper office. "We've never had any difficulty out of the expression of our opinions in editorials," the Darien editor remarked. "Trouble has always come out of printing just the facts. The *facts*."

The facts and much more spring to life in Melissa Fay Greene's dazzling first book. During the 1970s the civil rights movement arrived in McIntosh County and Sheriff Poppell's "good old boy era" came under attack. National civil rights organizations and well-known leaders had little to do with the assault. It came instead from local black citizens, spearheaded by Thurnell Alston, a proud, determined, uneducated boilermaker on a disability pension. Alston told Greene that, despite the booty of sheetrock and shoes, "the people here were just happy with nothing. It was a plantation mentality. The sheriff was running this county just like an old plantation. . . . When Tom said dance, you dance. When Tom said die, you die."

Alston battled the plantation mentality by his example and his words. The initial skirmishes, Greene makes clear, took place in the minds of the black citizens of McIntosh County—at their kitchen tables, in their backyards, at their Holiness churches, in their juke joints—as they gathered the moral courage to mount a dangerous all-out assault against the sheriff's paternalistic white supremacy.

Quoting interviews, Greene lets Alston, his wife, his neighbors and his friends tell much of the story in their own words. In McIntosh County, the words and cadences of black English, the Bible and Gullah intermingled in voices Greene likens to "a Georgia peach, a real Georgia peach, a backyard great-grandmother's-orchard peach . . . as thickly furred as a sweater, and so fluent and sweet that once you bite through the flannel, it brings tears to your eyes." Greene lets the reader eavesdrop on the shared confidences and blunt eloquence of these words as they marshaled the troops for the decisive confrontations.

The outcome was fixed in porch-swing conversations, when blacks reshaped their history.

Those words also make the book, as the subtitle announces, a work of nonfiction. Words are not facts like sheetrock but they are certainly not fiction either, Greene implies. The feelings, perceptions and truths that emboldened the black citizens of McIntosh County took shape in words—nonfiction that summoned action from belief. Those words gave voice to the history of black people in McIntosh County, "the numberless secret and eccentric tales—unwritten and untold (unless one pries and sits and waits, and comes back another day to sit and wait again for a candle to be carried into a pitch-black, long-sealed-up room of the soul) . . . the private chronicles that people relate to themselves, the most secret plots and narratives."

Beginning in 1972, Alston and his friends organized demonstrations that shredded Sheriff Poppell's smothering paternalism. Greene vividly narrates those memorable confrontations. But she suggests that we should not be misled by them like tourists in a razzle-dazzle parlor. The ultimate outcome of Poppell versus Alston, of whites versus blacks, was fixed. It was settled during those conversations when black folks reshaped their history in porch swings, in lawn chairs and

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alongside pickup trucks; no more praying for the sheriff's sheetrock; from now on, working, voting, praying for our own.

In the 1970s activist lawyers from the Georgia Legal Services Program brought the refinements of constitutional law to places like McIntosh County. "Most of our cases," one recalled, "were between people who, on one side, had never had a lawyer before, and on the other side, people for whom conforming to civil law was a novelty." The young attorneys helped Alston and his friends win a voting-rights suit that replaced at-large elections for county commissioners with a system that gave blacks a majority in one district. That district elected Thurnell Alston county commissioner in 1978, and he served almost continuously for ten years.

Commissioner Alston refused to let the white commissioners forget the black half of the population, as they had since Reconstruction. Alston helped black families replace outhouses and wells with plumbing and treated water. He located a medical building, staffed by a doctor, in the country where black folks could get to it. He arranged a program to assist black homeowners to add bathrooms—sheetrock and all. And he did more that annoyed the white commissioners and endeared him to his black constituents.

The conventional civil rights narrative ends here, in triumph and uplift. But Greene brings the story up to the present. Alston's success permitted his black supporters to focus on more pressing personal matters. Things got better; the fight seemed less urgent. Alston became bitter, cynical and corrupt. Arrested in a sting operation in 1988, he was sentenced to six and a half years in jail for accepting bribes, conspiracy to sell cocaine and possession.

It is tempting to see the civil rights movement in McIntosh County as a tragedy, an allegory of a larger, national disillusionment. But that is not Greene's view. For her the story is unfinished, the plot ambiguous. In McIntosh County, she writes, "the life of Thurnell Alston is at this moment being transformed and suffused with meaning, stitched into the quilt of the county's age-old oral history, the stories reaching back to slave times. This quilt is pulled out and shaken and reworked while the black people saw trees, haul in the fish nets, peel the shrimps, sit side by side in the cinder-block juke joints, and circle the smoky grills of backyard barbecue pits, balancing babies and full paper plates."

Praying for Sheetrock invites readers to piece Thurnell Alston and McIntosh County into the pattern formed by Montgomery and Greensboro and Birmingham and Selma and Memphis. *Praying for Sheetrock* refigures that pattern, placing ordinary people and their words at the center of a pinwheel of famous leaders and great events. The civil rights movement will never look quite the same. This book has the qualities of a "real Georgia peach . . . so fluent and sweet . . . it brings tears to your eyes." □

Of Mikes and Men

CHARLES NAYLOR

WLT: A Radio Romance. *By Garrison Keillor. Viking. 368 pp. $19.95.*

Has New York spoiled Garrison Keillor? Have travel, success, life? Surely not, though his faithful radio audience from *A Prairie Home Companion* days must wonder, having kept abreast of his movements, and reading that he has recently reopened on upper Broadway (at the Symphony Space). The TV broadcast of his last show from the World Theater in St. Paul, in 1987, barraged the ordinarily listening audience with unwelcome visual truths: Nothing looked the way it was supposed to—or at least not the way we had imagined—the space, the lighting, Jean Redpath's dress, Keillor's face. Instead of the comforting concoction we'd had in our heads—no glare, no wires—we might as well have been shown the dark side of the moon. Was Keillor reading the evening's monologue from a typescript? On the radio he made the stories up right at the mike—we supposed. But that's the thing about radio: You don't know.

To take it a step further, how could anyone hope to keep that fragile, evanescent quality of radio intact in a shift to print? The satire, the hook barely hidden within the wriggling worm, would survive, but what of the homespun stuff of speech, the nuance—would it become as invisible as the airwaves, lie dead on the page, evaporate?

To judge from the evidence of Keillor's *Happy to Be Here*, *Lake Wobegon Days*, *Leaving Home* and *We Are Still Married*, Lake Wobegon and company have adapted nicely—which is odd, because the town that time forgot but Keillor remembered is evidently not a place with a lot of books: some Emerson, maybe, or John Greenleaf Whittier—personal copies—but you don't hear about a Better Book Boutique or Bob's Pretty Good Library. (It's also, for those who keep track of such things, a community low on blacks, gays, Jews and—surprisingly for those who have spent time in Minnesota—Indians.)

Formally, *WLT: A Radio Romance* reaches considerably beyond any of Keillor's earlier successes, which all conveyed the bittersweet and, by turn, biting charm of his radio act. It is Keillor's first true novel, and a very good one. A raconteur who excels in shorter forms, he's tried everything from bawdry to bedtime story with great results—and now a sustained entertainment that pursues two threads, two lives—those of a singular young man, Francis With, and a radio station, WLT.

The first chapters plunge into the world of the station, introduce its founders, Roy and Ray, inventor and philanderer, respectively. Only in Chapter Three do we look back to the spring of 1926 and the harebrained beginnings of WLT (which is said to stand for "With Lettuce and Tomato"), founded to promote Roy and Ray Soderbjerg's new but already failing sandwich shop on Nicollet Avenue in South Minneapolis. Just when you begin to worry that this "novel" will never proceed in coherent and orderly fashion, strong primary colors emerge in the person of Patsy Konopka, a theosophist-positivist-ethereologist (who yodels). In no time she's writing scripts for several of WLT's radio dramas, including *Friendly Neighbor*, which had been faltering.

> The clock ticked, and she wrote, and the big hand crept toward airtime, and the pages came faster and faster. She believed in the power of threes, based on an old theosophist concept of virtue as triangular, and always looked for threes in a story, trios of characters, trilateral story lines, beginning-middle-end, thesis-antithesis-synthesis, quest-defeat-redemption.

Friendly Neighbor becomes almost a character in its own right, serving as backbone to the life of the station, with its Keilloresque nonstory of lovable old Dad Benson, who runs a feed store in Elmville and verbalizes "the things you had always thought yourself." One day the radio audience meets a couple and

Charles Naylor is the co-author, with Thomas M. Disch, of Neighboring Lives *(Johns Hopkins).*

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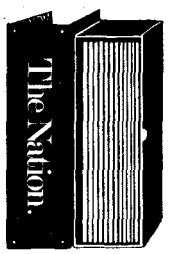

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child who come into the feed store to ask directions to the Moonlight Bay Supper Club. Dad immediately strikes up a friendship with the little girl, who has "never ridden a bicycle or thrown a ball or had her own dog or cat," and agrees to look after Little Becky while the blue-tuxedoed man and his paramour, "a tall buxom bejeweled woman named Ginger," go off for a swell weekend—but they never come back. Keillor's ploy of juxtaposing radio character against real-life player is repeatedly great fun, and Little Becky's performer, Marjery Moore—a Camel-smoking 14-year-old caution who swears "like a cowboy" and gooses her elders—is a winner. Ray tells Patsy to write Becky out, have her father show up again and take her away, but it is too late, the listeners love her. There's even talk of a Little Becky Scrapbook, and the story is all too like, we suspect, Keillor's own—stuck out in St. Paul, writing those monologues week after week, with entire years passing, a victim of his own success, reading each new National Public Radio gift brochure with mixed delight and horror.

One of Little Becky's listener-fans in particular, an 11-year-old small-towner, emerges as the hero-to-be, Francis With, who is the kind of (now probably extinct) kid who learns without fail five new words a day (*"arrant, confrere, agape, barbaric, eclipse"*) and stuffs them into conversations; who is universally hated by his classmates; who goes off alone on a bus to the Big City to have a look at the radio station and then pretty much stays. His appearance signals the beginning of a *Bildungsroman* thread in *WLT*—better, a *Bildungsroman* spoof. Is the Francis With character based to a degree on Garrison Keillor's early life? Probably not much. He is a writer with so fecund and generous an imagination that he will never need to scrape the bottom of that particular pot. It is more the way of Tom Jones or, possibly, Pip in *Great Expectations* that he explores here, and with a complex humor that buoys us up from any Dickensian darkness. Francis With has the additional virtue of knowing how to avoid the standard pitfall of *Bildungsroman* heroes: He's reasonably real—unlike, for example, the genre prototype, Wilhelm Meister, the stuffed-shirt cipher in Goethe's double-decker, or Paul Goodman's Horatio Alger in *The Empire City*, a faceless repository for the author's rich social agenda. Wisely, Francis With heralds his own coming of age with a name change. Now, as Frank White, he is ordinary yet vivid. "I don't know what his talent is," declares another character speaking of Frank, "but he sure is good at it."

The book is about American values: "Somebody paid you money to say what they wanted you to say and you said it. 'Here's ten dollars. Say *shit*,' so you took the money and said it. You said it ten times, as many as they wanted, and you said it with a grin, or whatever they wanted. A horrible truth in America: *money talks*." It is also a book that features both the requisite baseball set piece (with a twist) and the requisite American car chase at just that four-fifths point where most novels begin to sag. Never mind that no one's chasing anyone, or that it happens to be an old bus tearing over potholes at ninety miles an hour to beat the blizzard, the passengers either asleep or drunk. Unlike *A Prairie Home Companion*, this is a darker entertainment, for adults only, with a full measure of funny good poems, formal and otherwise. Mostly (and happily) it is a book about radio.

> Radio . . . was a raw primitive gorgeous device that unfortunately had been discovered too late. In the proper order of things, it should have come somewhere between the wheel and the printing press. It belonged to the age of bards and storytellers who squatted by the fire, when all news and knowledge was transmitted by telling. Coming at the wrong time, radio was inhibited by prior developments, such as literature. . . .
>
> If only radio had come first, it would have kept poetry and drama and stories in the happy old oral tradition and poets would simply be genial hosts who chant odes and lays instead of a bunch of nervous jerks like T.S. Eliot. . . . Literary principles of form mean nothing—radio has no linear context whatsoever. It is dreamlike, precognitive, primitive, intimate. It has less to do with politics or society than with sex, nature, and religion.

Garrison Keillor's mythical America, unlike the faded and inoffensive Midwest of Sandburg, is dreamed with an unblinking eye. His characters are idiosyncratic. They are culled from who knows where—from our collective past, certainly, but also from the demotic oral tradition of a rich and very real community that is gone and now exists only in recollection, a pretechnological mostly Minnesotan golden age from which one escaped to an unthinkable Chicago—or, God help us, New York—with a sinking heart. □

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Mountains Out of Moguls

CHARLES PAIKERT

For nearly a century now, movies have served us our national myths; movie stars are our cultural royalty. But only in the past decade has the movie *business* become a popular obsession.

While the tribulations of "show business" were occasionally used as a melodramatic storytelling device, the nitty-gritty details were ignored, even in the two early fictional masterpieces of the Inside Hollywood genre, Budd Schulberg's *What Makes Sammy Run?* and Nathanael West's *The Day of the Locust.* The names of studio executives, the financial performance of their films, their jargon and peccadilloes remained confined to the "community" and were chronicled only by the sympathetic trade papers.

All that changed in 1982 with the publication of David McClintick's best-selling *Indecent Exposure.* McClintick, an investigative reporter for *The Wall Street Journal*, combined his financial expertise and exhaustive reportorial technique to produce a meticulously detailed account of a scandal involving David Begelman, a prominent Hollywood executive who inexplicably forged a series of checks that Columbia Pictures wrote to the actor Cliff Robertson.

The real story, McClintick realized, was not the check-forging itself but the Watergate-like repercussions the incident triggered in the executive hierarchy at Columbia, one of Hollywood's biggest and most venerable studios. The cutthroat politics, deals and vendettas executed by the wealthy, powerful, egomaniacal (and colorful) characters who *really* ran the movie business—from offices in Manhattan, not Hollywood—proved to be much more compelling than gossip about mere actors.

With businessmen becoming as celebrated in the popular press as entertainers or politicians in the Reagan era, McClintick's timing was perfect. If cars, real estate and finance could make superstars out of S.O.B. suits like Lee Iacocca, Donald Trump and Michael Milken, how could prototype baby boomer overachievers like Jeffrey Katzenberg, Mike Ovitz and Peter Guber—"major players" in the *movie* business for crying out loud—possibly miss out?

Charles Paikert is an associate editor at Variety.

By the end of the decade, Hollywood execs, agents, producers and lawyers were indeed famous, and jargon like "back-end deal," "greenlight" and "turnaround" became the hip equivalents of "runs batted in." The glossy magazines really went crazy, recycling endless stories about the allegedly superhuman work habits of Disney exec Katzenberg ("If you don't come in Saturday, don't bother coming in on Sunday") and the supposedly unlimited power and cunning of Creative Artists Agency president Ovitz.

IN THIS REVIEW

NAKED HOLLYWOOD: Money and Power in the Movies Today. *By Nicolas Kent. St. Martin's. 256 pp. $22.95.*

FORCE MAJEURE. *By Bruce Wagner. Random House. 468 pp. $23.*

THE DEVIL'S CANDY: "The Bonfire of the Vanities" Goes to Hollywood. *By Julie Salamon. Houghton Mifflin. 434 pp. $24.95.*

Entertainment Tonight, the television equivalent of an old-fashioned fan mag, scrupulously includes inside-the-biz segments; *Premiere* mixes sober business stories with the traditional fluff; and the really with-it, supersmug *Spy* regularly embarrasses the biggest names in the business. Prestigious newspapers like *The New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal*, the *Los Angeles Times* and *The Washington Post* substantially beefed up their entertainment industry coverage. *Variety* and *The Hollywood Reporter*, once sleepy family businesses, were snapped up by major media corporations.

Even the highbrows couldn't resist. Playwright David Mamet weighed in with *Speed-the-Plow*, a lacerating parable/parody of Hollywood deal-making (in a deliciously ironic twist, the cast was compromised by adding stage-stiff superstar Madonna as marquee bait for Broadway); novelist Charles Bukowski wrote *Hollywood*; and cultural historian Neil Gabler dissected the movie business's rather unlikely Eastern European–Jewish roots in *An Empire of Their Own: How the Jews Invented Hollywood.*

The best-selling performance of last spring's *You'll Never Eat Lunch in This Town Again* by Julia Phillips proved that the public's appetite for the insider genre is still far from satiated. Nor, judging from her rambling, druggy dirge of trivial, gossipy minutiae, is it particularly demanding. Yet as it happens, three of the latest entries in the field are actually quite good.

Nicolas Kent, a British journalist and filmmaker, made a splash during the summer with his much-publicized TV documentary *Naked Hollywood*, purportedly a controversial, no-holds-barred "exposé" of how Hollywood really works. In truth, nothing new was revealed, although several agents and producers were relatively candid. It was the TV equivalent of a 101 introductory review course—Hollywood Today. The book, surprisingly, is better. *Naked Hollywood* isn't merely a reprint of the documentary's script but a well-written account that stands on its own as a reliable, if uncritical, primer.

Hollywood's Holy Troika—money, deals and personal relationships—is dutifully explained, as are the latest twists, like "packaging," "first dollar gross deals" and presales of international rights. Kent's strength as an outsider who's able to see the whole thing with a fresh eye is also his weakness: an infatuation with the subject that allows for breadth but little real depth. He can't keep Hollywood clichés ("monster hit," "Hollywood eats writers for breakfast") out of his prose, and he's obsequiously kind to those who cooperated with him, particularly actor James Caan, who is oddly presented as a paradigm of integrity fighting the lonely good fight amidst a legion of philistines. Worse yet, Kent refers only glancingly to one of the core truths about Hollywood that McClintick so harshly exposed ten years ago: that the decisions about Hollywood are made in New York (now updated to include Tokyo).

If *Naked Hollywood* is a breezy guidebook for the uninitiated, then Bruce Wagner's novel *Force Majeure* is the fictional equivalent of a confidential psychiatric report. Very much from the Schulberg/West Dark Underbelly School, Wagner takes this genre to its most extreme literary outpost yet—and the competition's been pretty healthy. Fitzgerald and Mailer, after all, plumbed Hollywood's depths; Bruce Jay Friedman staked his claim with his Harry Townes stories; and David Freeman's *A Hollywood Education* and Michael Tolkin's *The Player* reinvigorated the genre with wicked parody and unrepentant cynicism in the eighties.

Wagner goes all the way, tackling head-

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on the Dark Underbelly School's principal themes of illusion, betrayal, greed and the conflict between art and commerce. His hero, screenwriter Bud Wiggins, is hip, smart and funny, but a wounded loser who flirts with tragedy and ultimately finds it. Along the way, Wagner mercilessly skewers Hollywood's insular rituals. Much like Tom Wolfe, Wagner has an unerring gift for pitch-perfect character nuances and authentic contemporary dialogue. And he never relies on *roman à clef* techniques.

This renders the sting of recognition much deeper and more personal. Unfortunately, *Force Majeure* reads better if seen as a series of short stories than as a unified novel. It's too long and loosely connected with too many cul-de-sacs. But Wiggins's personal demons just aren't as compelling as Wagner's scathing depictions of pitch meetings and relationships defined by anxiety, deceit and hypocrisy.

Julie Salamon's *The Devil's Candy* also has roots in an honorable literary tradition. In 1952, Lillian Ross wrote *Picture*, chronicling the production of John Huston's film of *The Red Badge of Courage*. Two years ago director Brian DePalma allowed Salamon, a reporter and critic for *The Wall Street Journal*, to act as a fly-on-the-wall observer during the production of the film version of Tom Wolfe's *The Bonfire of the Vanities*. She made the most of it, writing a definitive account of how movies actually get made today that completes a contemporary trilogy begun by Stephen Bach's *Final Cut: Dreams and Disaster in the Making of Heaven's Gate* and Peter Bart's *Fade Out: The Calamitous Final Days of MGM*.

Salamon also got lucky. *Bonfire* proved to be an epic bomb, a classic case of a major studio (Warner Brothers) mangling a best-selling novel. The heavy-handed DePalma, for example, seemed an odd choice to transform Wolfe's cerebral satire into a film, but it turns out that his best friend Steven Spielberg had given his pal Terry Semel, Warner Brothers' president, an enthusiastic job recommendation. The role of dissolute British journalist Peter Fallow went to Bruce Willis, whose acting talents were acknowledged by all concerned to be limited at best, but who was hot at the time (and could demand a $5 million fee). Even more startling was the casting of Morgan Freeman, a black man, in the role of Myron Kovitsky, a feisty Jewish judge in the Bronx. The judge's New York Jewishness is central to his character, but Warner executives were worried because there were no sympathetic black characters in the script. The judge, Warner executive Lucy Fisher believed, should be played "by a minority-type person."

Salamon records the machinations of wrongheaded multimillion-dollar decisions and the personal details of daily life during production with equal fidelity. The minutiae often bring out her best writing, such as the description of DePalma silently extending his arm, fully expecting to receive the forthcoming specially prepared cup of cappuccino from his personal assistant. No words punctuate the exchange. While Salamon doesn't try to make the remote and imperious DePalma sympathetic, you still get the sense that she goes easy on him. This flaw is far from fatal, however, because the entire moviemaking process is the book's true central character, not the director. This blueprint-like quality occasionally lapses into tedium, lingering on details that only a film-school student could love. But for the most part it serves the reader well, revealing with clear-eyed detail exactly how and why business continually triumphs over art in Hollywood.

That isn't exactly a surprise, of course. So why do so many spend so much time devouring stories about big, bad show business? A screenwriter I know in Los Angeles says it's because the movies represent the only business in America where someone can be walking on the beach penniless in the morning and be a millionaire in the afternoon. An editor I know in New York says his insatiable appetite for stories about "the biz" is like being fascinated by magic tricks—he needs to keep trying to figure it out.

Nicolas Kent concludes *Naked Hollywood* by saying that today the mystique of Hollywood feeds not only on glamour or romance but on power. And one could add an updated Walter Mitty factor: Hollywood Exec has replaced Wall Street Investment Banker as the job of choice for newly minted Ivy League M.B.A.s. They know they'll need luck more than spreadsheets, but they—and others covetous of a lavish Bel Air life style—are also hip to Hollywood's dirty little secret, courtesy of William Goldman's *Adventures in the Screen Trade*: Nobody Knows Anything. □

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STUART KLAWANS

Cape Fear

Now that Martin Scorsese has remade *Cape Fear*, I think it's time for our chat about the *auteur* theory and why "Hollywood" no longer exists.

Why do we say "*auteur* theory," anyway? The term, coined in 1954 by François Truffaut in *Cahiers du Cinéma*, was originally *politique des auteurs*. By this, Truffaut meant that *Cahiers* would, on principle, promote the interests of certain filmmakers over others. This was minor-scale politics; but Truffaut surely was thinking about Politics, too. The *auteur* was not simply a film director of better-than-average abilities. The *auteur* was someone who could achieve a personal form of expression while working within the impersonality of the studio system. So *auteurism* had to do with a lot more than which movies you liked. It spoke to the predicament of anyone trying to live as an individual within a society based on mass production.

Some nine years later, *auteurism* burst upon America in the pages of *Film Culture* (Winter 1962/63), in Andrew Sarris's article "Notes on the *Auteur* Theory." From the title alone, you will notice the change: Politics had started to drop out. I don't want to oversimplify—Sarris certainly didn't—but it's fair to say that for the multitudes who adopted his formulation, *auteurism* became by and large an aesthetic proposition, a matter of weighing directors against one another, promoting this one to the Pantheon, demoting the other. You might ascribe the shift in emphasis to national and personal character alike. Americans really do have little talent for ideology compared with the French; and Sarris, like many other lower-middle-class intellectuals from immigrant backgrounds (me, for instance), wanted an art worth believing in, complete with masterpieces, geniuses and transcendence. So sue us.

The real difficulty, though, in keeping the politics in the *politique des auteurs* was that the studio system was dying. In Hollywood, it was already in decline when Truffaut wrote his article. The Supreme Court's antitrust decision against Paramount et al. in 1948 had deprived the major studios of their control over movie theaters. No longer guaranteed an outlet

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for their products, the studios geared down the assembly line. Protective tariffs in Europe also contributed to the decline. American studios were finding it cheaper to make movies overseas—more productive capacity lost. And then, of course, there was television. It took a long time for the studio system to wither away, but the process was well advanced by the time of Sarris's article.

We must now think about the activities of two other people in late 1962. Martin Scorsese, who had just turned 20, was at New York University, studying toward his bachelor's degree; and J. Lee Thompson, a British-American director, was at the brief height of his career. The previous year, he'd scored his biggest success with *The Guns of Navarone*; his prestige production for 1962, which turned out to be a relative disappointment at the box office, was *Taras Bulba*. That year, he also made a potboiler, *Cape Fear*, which attracted a following among fans of nasty, efficient little thrillers.

J. Lee Thompson never made it anywhere near Sarris's Pantheon. His earlier output had included such items as *An Alligator Named Daisy* (1955); he went on to direct *Conquest of the Planet of the Apes* and *Battle for the Planet of the Apes* (1972, 1973) and the famously awful *The Reincarnation of Peter Proud* (1975). (To put things into perspective: Sarris didn't think the director of the original *Planet of the Apes*, Franklin Schaffner, belonged in the Pantheon either, but he *did* declare Schaffner an *auteur*, listing him in *The American Cinema* under the category of "Lightly Likable," a distinction he denied Lee Thompson.) As for Scorsese, he soon broke into the movie business with *Who's That Knocking at My Door?* (1968), which clearly was not a studio picture, even by the relaxed standards of the era. Since then, he has made only two and a half films that resemble factory work—*Boxcar Bertha* (1972), *Alice Doesn't Live Here Anymore* (1975) and *The Color of Money* (1986). The rest has unmistakably been art. He's the lower-middle-class immigrant type.

We reach the present. "Hollywood," a factory geared up to a certain level of production, is still in operation, but in the television business. When it comes to movies, the big studios now act as financiers and distributors more than as producers. Like all bankers, they impose their will upon the borrowers; to that extent, the people who actually make the movies still have to contend with the impersonal forces of capital, as Julie Salamon shows in her new book *The Devil's Candy* [see Charles Paikert, page 825]. It's also true that institutional tendencies may still emerge within studios. Paramount is especially keen on properties with ready-made audiences: *The Addams Family* or *Star Trek VI*. Touchstone is celebrated for its shrewdness in signing contracts with faded stars (Bette Midler, for example) and shining them up again. Even so, the days are past when a studio kept actors, directors, writers and everybody else on hand as labor power to crank out so many feet of celluloid per year. Instead, the work force and the entrepreneurs come and go. This year, Spike Lee released a film through Universal; next year, it will be Warner Brothers. Last year, Martin Scorsese released a film through Warner Brothers. This year, it's Universal. The age of anarcho-capitalism has set in. Perhaps we could look in retrospect at Sam Peckinpah's *The Wild Bunch* (1969) and see it as a vision of this new epoch, filmed as the old epoch was dying. It's about a desert (much like Los Angeles) in which the economic system decrees a war of all against all, where only fools have loyalties to institutions, and ragtag bands of outlaws (much like movie directors and their crews) cut the best deals they can, for as long as they can.

Does the change matter? Consider that only a few weeks ago, somebody wondered aloud in these pages why so many people are writing screenplays. Now you have the answer: because nobody's in charge. When you had real heads of production running real movie studios, there was no market for screenplays written on speculation. Everything was made to order. Today, with producers and would-be producers swarming everywhere, the rule is, option anything that's on paper. You might also begin to understand why talent packagers such as Michael Ovitz have become so powerful; why productions such as *Heaven's Gate* and *Hudson Hawk* can run so far out of control; why the popular game of finding trends in big-studio movies has become a little like studying Rorschach blots. Still believing in the existence of a "Hollywood," we pore over the pictures, convinced we can identify what They want to tell us. We'd do better to recall the question of the old coot in *The Wild Bunch*: "Who the hell is they?"

Now, Martin Scorsese seems as muddled in anachronism as the rest of us; but in his case, the results are inter-

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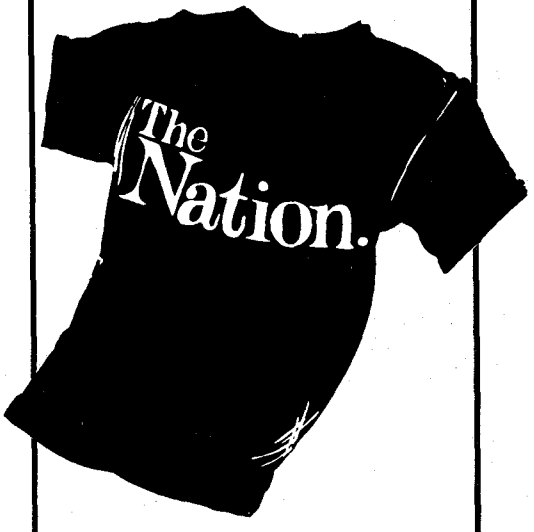

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esting. As a moviegoer, he came of age when American *auteurism* was at its height. As a filmmaker, he came to maturity when the studio system was breathing its last. History robbed Scorsese of the chance to be an *auteur* in the full, oppositional sense of the term. So now, as compensation, he's gone back thirty years and inserted himself into a studio product, *Cape Fear*, giving it the one thing it lacked in 1962—a star performance by the director.

Never mind Nick Nolte, Jessica Lange, Robert De Niro. The stars of this film are Martin Scorsese and his Wonder Camera. As long ago as *Raging Bull* (1980), he proved he could use more of the resources of the cinema, with greater expressive power, than anybody else around. Since then, part of the fun of seeing each new Scorsese film has been finding out what sort of maximalist synthesis he'd arrive at. This time, assisted by cinematographer Freddie Francis, Scorsese assembles suspense-building long takes and breath-grabbing quick cuts, slow dollies and head-snapping swish pans, eerie long shots (juiced up with optical effects) and the sort of unrelenting close-up that lets you examine the pores in an actor's face. At one point, he makes the camera stand on its head. At another, he gets so keyed up that the screen becomes almost nonrepresentational; you'd think someone had spliced in a few feet of a Stan Brakhage film. And all the while that he's drawing attention to his skill with the camera, Scorsese is also recalling, in true *auteurist* fashion, themes and images from his previous films. You know there's going to be big trouble in *Cape Fear* because Travis Bickle—excuse me, Robert De Niro—is already doing push-ups when the movie starts.

He's working out so hard because he's about to be released from jail and plans to avenge himself on the man who put him there. In his mind, that's Sam Bowden (Nick Nolte), who was his defense attorney fourteen years earlier and did not perform up to expectations. Already, Scorsese and the screenwriter, Wesley Strick, have significantly changed the story. In the original film, with a script by James R. Webb based on a novel by John D. MacDonald, Bowden had been the accuser. The new version gives Sam his own measure of guilt, because he's suppressed a piece of evidence that might have aided his client. He did it for the best of motives—the criminal, Max Cady, had raped and mutilated a young girl. Sam Bowden didn't have the stomach to defend him vigorously, which was admirable on one level but on another was a dereliction of duty. As his punishment for this long-forgotten breach of ethics, Sam must now watch Cady threaten to repeat the crime, this time with Sam's wife, Leigh (Jessica Lange), and 15-year-old daughter, Danielle (Juliette Lewis).

Is the film scary? Yes—nerve-wracking, in fact. It's also sometimes horrifically violent, and so hyperbolic in depicting Max Cady's powers of evil that some wags are calling it *Terminator 3*. For sheer bravura in manipulating an audience, it beats anything released this year, last year and very likely next year as well. And yet, for those of us who think Scorsese's films are worth believing in, one big question still remains. Does the film have anything to say?

I tried to answer that question and wound up making a list, which I regard as plausible rather than verifiable. Watch *Cape Fear* and decide for yourself how many of the following are valid: The film is about the venerable American theme of vigilantism, or the inadequacy of law. It's about the not-so-hidden injuries of class. It's about bad, stupid ideas of sexuality and the emotions, which many people pass off as good and smart; it's about good and smart people who understand what rape means and yet can't act on their understanding. It's about sour marriages and parent-child tensions and the agonies of adolescence and Little Red Riding Hood. It's about Martin Scorsese's fear and loathing of Protestantism and the world outside New York. It's about the return of the repressed—and ultimately about the need for repression.

The score is by Bernard Herrmann. □

LETTERS.

(*Continued From Page 798*)

a round at the stray Senderista. But the drug war is the main attraction, and has taken the place of the war against communism in the "global South" (as opposed to extraplanetary South?).

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Robin Kirk

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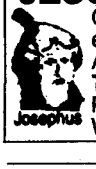

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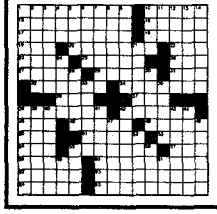

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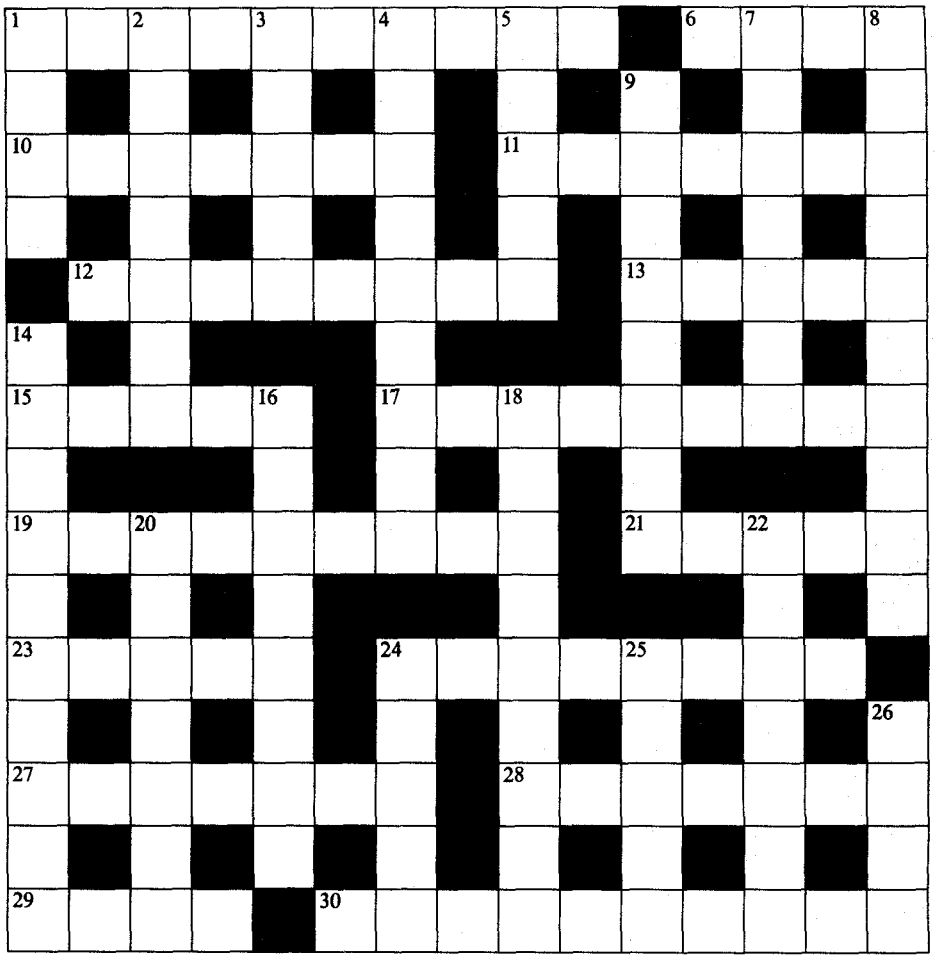
W	E	R	E	W	O	L	V	E	S		I	V	A	N
A		E		A		I		R		E		E		E
S	T	A	K	I	N	G		A	R	M	E	N	I	A
H		D		T		H		S		B		T		T
E	A	T	S		S	T	R	I	K	E	D	U	M	B
D		H		D		E		N		L		R		U
O	P	E	N	A	I	R		G	I	L	B	E	R	T
V				I						I				N
E	T	R	U	R	I	A		R	I	S	O	T	T	O
R		I		Y		R		E		H		A		T
B	R	O	O	M	S	T	I	C	K		B	R	I	G
O		T		A		I		Y		P		H		A
A	N	A	N	I	A	S		C	H	A	T	E	A	U
R		C		D		A		L		I		E		D
D	U	T	Y		I	N	F	E	R	N	A	L	L	Y

Crossword Puzzle No. 2363

FRANK W. LEWIS



ACROSS

1 Nothing hurried to ask a favor in return to the wise old bird in Miami every year. (6,4)
6 You and I and Mr. Sullivan got taken advantage of! (4)
10 Food for a violinist, in part. (7)
11 Not quite a thousand camera studies, as one puts upon others. (7)
12 Bifurcated resting place around the the stock location. (8)
13 Like a cherry or possibly an apple, a little firm around the edges, as I believe! (5)
15 Relative point in a French city. (5)
17 If they work on you, you shouldn't have much spirit left! (Former alternative to the old chest?) (9)
19 The dungeon where they used to forget who was put there? (9)
21 See 1 down
23 One-quarter tract of land for Pearl's progenitor? (5)
24 Often listed on the scoreboard as such, a half-dozen take place, or end up with one point. (8)
27 Poetically always found a sort of liar, but comparatively before the fact. (7)
28 Evidently Jude isn't well known. (7)
29 See 26 down
30 One who sells boats to the Chinese must have a lot of discarded material. (4,6)

DOWN

1 and 21 across Just we two the French bear little people, also. (9)
2 Like the Burma Shave signs we used to see near the highway, it's not very favorable. (7)
3 Organ transplant that indicates some pain? (5)
4 Kennedy's were correct in the most perfect circumstances, being that and the most brainy. (9)
5 and 7 Resists being called like the Fates? (5,7)
8 Diana's law-enforcement groups have a point, which is to turn someone out. (10)
9 Such a circle doesn't make a slip, with pie prepared to go by a kid's transportation. (8)
14 Meets those that enumerate certain small types? (10)
16 Sort of pied strain of mice, widespread. (8)
18 Carry too much on top of horses, for example? (9)
20 Books may be so bound to display both the deer and the goat. (7)
22 Being in power, though not expressed, it's 24 down given to such as Capone. . . . (7)
24 . . . . which is precious stuff! (5)
25 Good judgment in certain things is certainly in a confused state! (5)
26 and 29 across Don't be afraid of everyone, just this, which is dreadful! (8)

PUZZLE BOOK

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Finally...

American Jews Are Coming Out Of The Middle East *Political Closet...*

FOR A JUST and lasting peace to finally become possible between Israel, the Palestinians, and the Arab States, the following principles must be adhered to:

COMPREHENSIVE PEACE:

A COMPREHENSIVE PEACE INCLUDING PALESTINIAN INDEPENDENCE, RECOGNITION OF ISRAEL BY THE ARAB STATES, AND SECURE BORDERS THROUGHOUT THE REGION, MUST BE THE GOAL OF THE CURRENT NEGOTIATIONS -- NOT ANOTHER LIMITED AGREEMENT BASED ON POLITICAL PRESSURES AND FINANCIAL INDUCEMENTS OVERLOOKING OR FURTHER DELAYING THE BASIC PALESTINIAN RIGHT TO SELF-DETERMINATION.

U.N. RESOLUTIONS:

U.N. SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTIONS MUST BE FULFILLED AND ENFORCED -- MOST ESPECIALLY THOSE REQUIRING THAT ISRAEL WITHDRAW FROM OCCUPIED ARAB TERRITORIES AND THAT PEACEFUL RELATIONS THEN BE ESTABLISHED BETWEEN THE ARAB COUNTRIES AND ISRAEL.

PALESTINIAN NATIONALISM:

LIKE ALL OTHER PARTIES, THE PALESTINIANS MUST BE FREE TO CHOOSE THEIR OWN REPRESENTATIVES, WITH THE PALESTINE LIBERATION ORGANIZATION (PLO) WIDELY RECOGNIZED THROUGHOUT THE WORLD TO EMBODY PALESTINIAN ASPIRATIONS.

SUSPENSION OF AID TO ISRAEL:

IF ISRAEL CONTINUES ITS BRUTAL POLICIES TOWARD THE PALESTINIANS, CONTINUES TO BUILD ILLEGAL SETTLEMENTS IN THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES, AND CONTINUES TO REFUSE TO NEGOTIATE WITH FREELY CHOSEN PALESTINIAN REPRESENTATIVES ON THE BASIS OF U.N. SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTIONS, THEN WE URGE WESTERN COUNTRIES, MOST ESPECIALLY THE UNITED STATES, TO SUSPEND ALL ASSISTANCE TO ISRAEL PENDING CHANGES IN THESE POLICIES.

CONFIDENCE-BUILDING MEASURES:

CONFIDENCE-BUILDING MEASURES ARE URGENTLY REQUIRED. WE STRONGLY ENDORSE THE WORLDWIDE CALL FOR ISRAEL TO END ALL SETTLEMENT ACTIVITIES IN THE WEST BANK, GAZA STRIP, GOLAN HEIGHTS, AND EAST JERUSALEM WITHOUT ANY FURTHER DELAY. AND WE LOOK FORWARD TO A COMPREHENSIVE PEACE AGREEMENT WHICH MUST INCLUDE AN END TO THE ARAB BOYCOTT AGAINST ISRAEL, FULLY RECOGNIZED BORDERS WITH DEMILITARIZATION ARRANGEMENTS, FIRM INTERNATIONAL GUARANTEES, AS WELL AS REGIONAL ARMS CONTROL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLANS.

MUTUAL ISRAEL-PALESTINIAN RECOGNITION:

MOST CRITICAL OF ALL IS THE URGENT NEED FOR BOTH THE ISRAELI NATIONAL MOVEMENT AND THE PALESTINIAN NATIONAL MOVEMENT TO RECOGNIZE EACH OTHER, NEGOTIATE WITH EACH OTHER, AND ACCEPT EACH OTHER'S LEGITIMATE RIGHT TO NATIONAL INDEPENDENCE. CONTINUING EFFORTS TO AVOID THIS CRUCIAL STEP WILL LIKELY RESULT ONLY IN TEMPORARY COSMETIC POLITICAL ARRANGEMENTS THAT WILL BE THE CAUSE OF FURTHER CONFLICT IN FUTURE YEARS.

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Israel Army General Staff, '67 War

"Israeli Jews like myself join with JCOME -- and I'm delighted that such a committee exists in the U.S. -- to urge a suspension of American aid to Israel until... Israel agrees to cease the occupation."
Natan Zach
Israel's most renowned poet

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